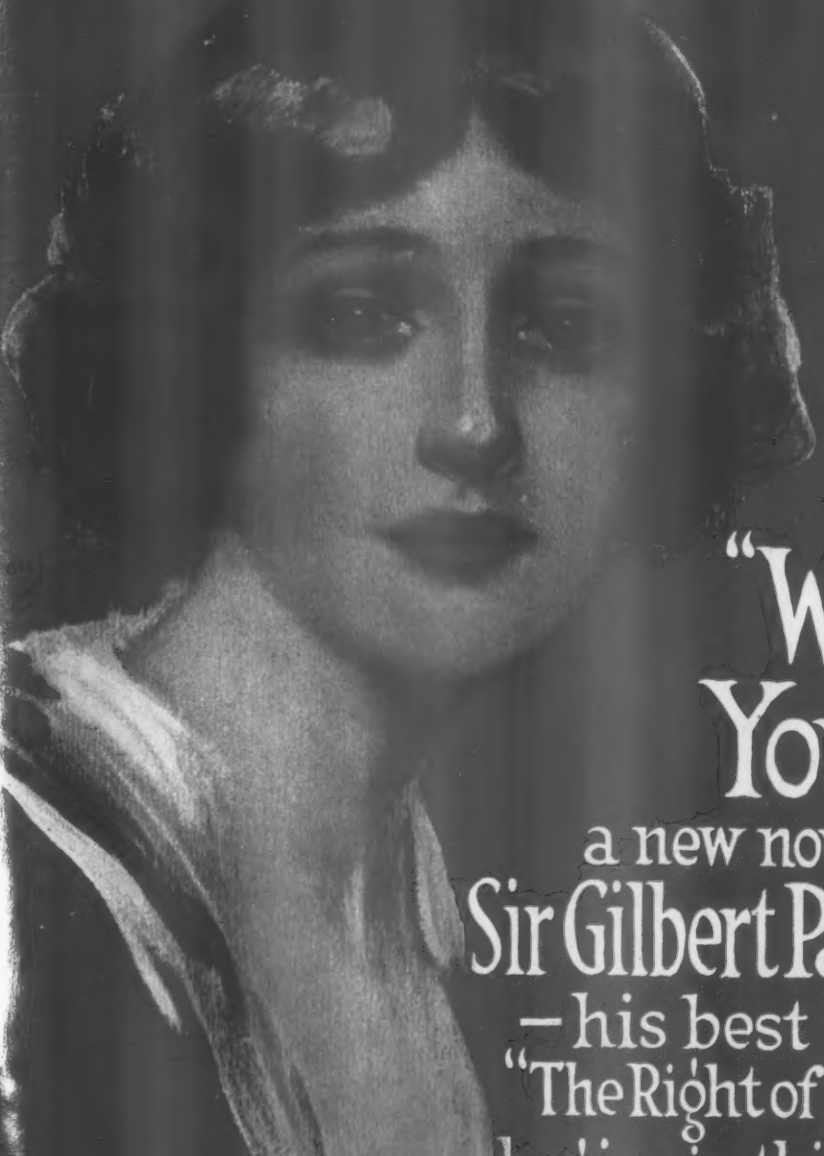


JULY 1915

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE  
**RED BOOK**  
MAGAZINE



"Wild  
Youth"

a new novel by  
Sir Gilbert Parker  
— his best since  
"The Right of Way"—  
beginning in this issue





# JULY RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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## PHOTOGRAPHIC ART STUDIES Beautiful Women of the Stage

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**The Island of Surprise** .....  
The most surprising installment of all in this new novel by the author of "The Island of Regeneration."
- By Sir Gilbert Parker** ..... 434  
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- By Mrs. Humphry Ward** ... 496  
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- By Cyrus Townsend Brady** - 562  
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- A Black Cat for Luck** .....  
Joseph Reginald was the feline's name, and he brought the greatest luck in the world to the young playwright.
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An old-fashioned tale of the Spanish Main, of a maid in distress and of buried treasure.
- An Arizona Knight** .....  
A story by a talented new writer, wherein a misadventure is turned into a romance.
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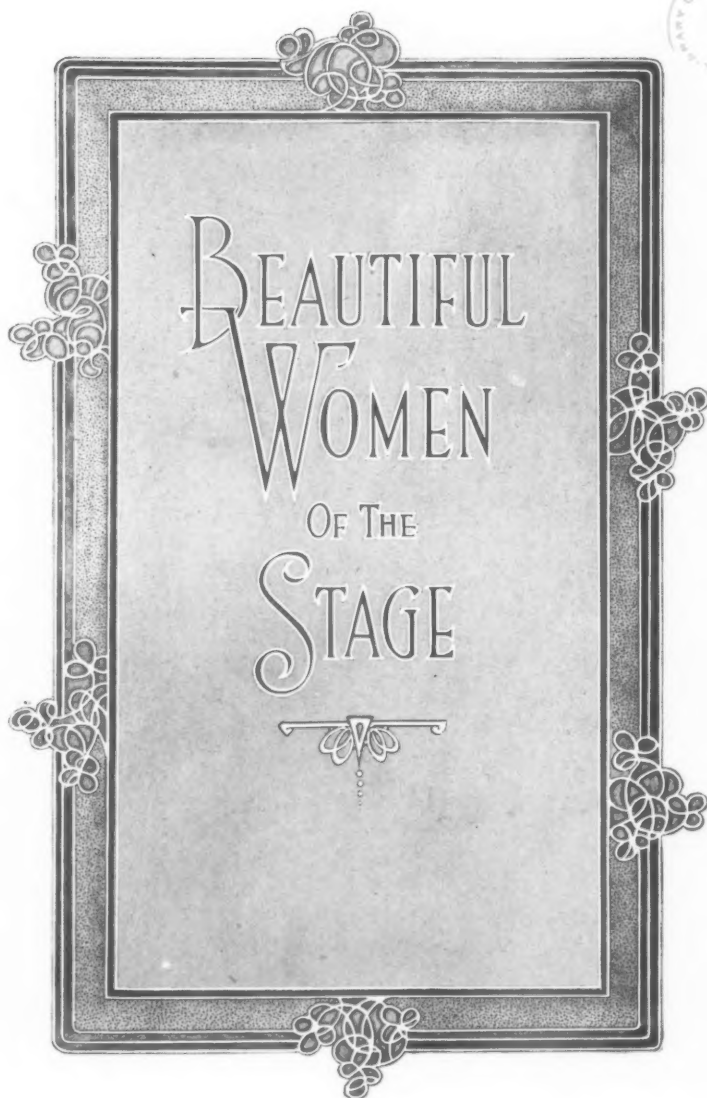
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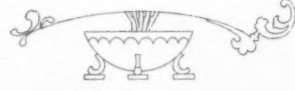
PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MARGUERITE LESLIE  
in "The Outcast"





SARAH McDONAGH  
Exponent of Society Dances





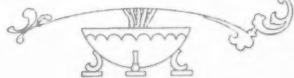
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NANCY POWELL  
in "Nearly Married"





JEANNE EAGLES  
in "The Crinoline Girl"







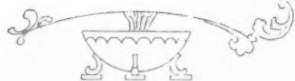
PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

ELSIE Mac KAY  
in "Grumpy"





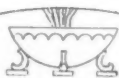
LOUISE COOK





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JOSEPHINE HARRIMAN  
Exponent of Latest Dances





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EMILY FRANCES HOOPER  
Exponent of Latest Dances





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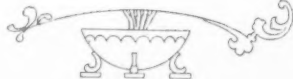
ALEXANDRA CARLISLE  
in "Rosemary"





PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MARGARET WARD  
in "The Passing Show"





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FRANCINE LARRIMORE  
in "The Lady We Love"

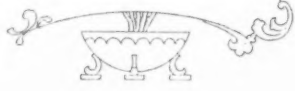






PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MRS. PAUL BARTICK  
in "Ringling Brothers Circus"





*Drawn by Walter Tittle to illustrate the most surprising chapter of all in*

**"THE ISLAND  
OF SURPRISE"**

*by Cyrus Townsend Brady  
—see page 363*

Dorothy Arden, torn, battered, blood-stained, with only a wooden shield for defense and a blunted ax with which to fight, did not wait for the savages. She actually leaped forward to meet them.

July  
1915

THE  
**RED BOOK**  
MAGAZINE

Vol. XXV  
No. 3

RAY LONG, Editor



George  
Fitch

SOME new motor-boat stories by George Fitch!

That is the next of THE RED BOOK'S pace-setting features. (When George Fitch writes about a motor-boat, he writes the most humorous story imaginable.) The first—"Gasoline *plus* Alcohol"—will be in the August issue. That's an issue you must not miss—Gilbert Parker, Meredith Nicholson, George Fitch, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Ellis Parker Butler, John Fleming Wilson, Albert Payson Terhune, Walter Jones, Cyrus Townsend Brady and a number of others have written their best for it. Watch for the August issue, on the news-stands July 23rd.

THE RED BOOK IS SETTING THE  
PACE IN THE MAGAZINE WORLD

# WILD

By  
Gilbert  
Parker

Author of "The Weavers,"  
"The Seats of the Mighty,"  
"The Right of Way," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

## CHAPTER I

### THE MAZARINES TAKE POSSESSION

**F**ROM the beginning, Askatoon had had more character and idiosyncrasy than any other town in the West. Perhaps that was because many of its citizens

Louise Mazarine, the heroine of Sir Gilbert Parker's new romance: a willowy slip of a girl, not more than nineteen, who reminded one of a captive young bird.

FRANK B.  
WHEATMAN

# YOUTH

A new novel of a Beauty and a Beast, laid in Canada; the most absorbing and the most daring story by Sir Gilbert since his "The Right of Way" swept the readers on two sides of the Atlantic.

FRANK B. HOFFMAN

had marked personality, while some were distinctly original—a few so original as to be almost bizarre. The general intelligence was high, and this made the place alert for the new person. It slept with one eye open; it waked with both eyes wide—as wide as the windows of the world. The virtue of being bright and smart was a doctrine which had never been taught in Askatoon; it was as natural as eating and drinking.

Joel Mazarine, her husband, sixty-five if he was a day, prophet-bearded, huge, "The Ancient One from the Jungle," as Sir Gilbert puts it.



Nothing ever really shook the place out of a wholesome control and composure. Now and then, however, the flag of distress was hoisted, and everybody in the place—from Patsy Kernaghan, the casual, at one end of the scale, and the Young Doctor, who represented Askatoon in the meridian of its intellect, at the other—had sudden paralysis. That was the outstanding feature of Askatoon. Some places made a noise and flung things about in times of distress; but Askatoon always stood still and fumbled with its collar-buttons, as though to get more air. When it was deeply and poignantly moved, it leaned against the wall of its common sense, abashed, but vigilant and careful.

That is what it did when Mr. and Mrs. Joel Mazarine arrived at Askatoon to take possession of Mayo, the ranch which Michael Turley, abandoning because he had an unavoidable engagement in another world, left to his next of kin, with a legacy to another kinsman a little farther off. The next of kin had proved to be Joel Mazarine, from one of those stern English counties on the borders of Quebec, where ancient tribal prejudices and religious animosities provide a necessary relaxation to hard-driven human nature.

Michael Turley had lived much to himself on his ranch, but that was because in his latter days he had developed a secret taste for spirituous liquors which he had no inclination to share with others. With the assistance of a bad cook and a constant spleen caused by resentment against the interference of his priest, good Father Roche, he finished his career with great expedition and without either becoming a nuisance to his neighbors or ruining his property. The property was clear of mortgage or debt when he set out on his endless journey.

When the prophet-bearded, huge, swarthy-faced Joel Mazarine, with a beautiful young girl behind him, stepped from the West-bound train and was greeted by the Mayor, who was one of the executors of Michael Turley's will, a shiver passed through Askatoon, and for one instant animation was suspended; for the jungle-looking newcomer, mo-

tioning forward the young girl, said to the Mayor:

"Mayor, this is Mrs. Mazarine. Shake hands with the Mayor, Mrs. Mazarine."

Mazarine did not speak very loud, but as an animal senses the truth of a danger far off with an unshakable certainty, the crowd at the station seemed to know by instinct what he said.

"Hell—that old whale and her!" growled Jonas Billings, the keeper of the livery-stable.

At Mazarine's words the Young Doctor, a man of rare gifts, individuality and authority in the place, who had come to the station to see a patient off to the mountains by this train, drew in his breath sharply, and as though a spirit of repugnance was hissing in his heart. This happened during the first years of the Young Doctor's career at Askatoon, when he was still alive with human prejudices, although he had a nature wonderfully balanced and singularly just. The strife between his prejudices and his sense of justice was what made him always interesting, and increasingly influential in all the great prairie and foothill country of which Askatoon was the center.

He had got his shock indeed before Mazarine had introduced his wife to the Mayor. Not for nothing had he studied the human mind in its relation to the human body, and the expression of that mind speaking through the body. The instant Joel Mazarine and his wife stepped out of the train, he knew they were what they were to each other. That was a real achievement in knowledge, because Mazarine was certainly sixty-five if he was a day, and his wife was a slim, willowy slip of a girl, not more than nineteen years of age, with the most wonderful Irish blue eyes and long dark lashes. There was nothing of the wife or woman about her, save something in the eyes, which seemed to belong to ages past and gone, something so solemnly wise, yet so painfully confused, that there flashed into the Young Doctor's mind at first glance of her the vision of a young bird caught from its thoughtless, sun-bright journeyings, its reckless buoyancy and freedom of winged life, into the captivity of a cage.

She smiled, this child, as she shook hands with the Mayor, and it had the appeal of one who had learned the value of smiling—as though it answered many a question and took the place of words and the trials of the tongue. It was pitifully mechanical. As the Young Doctor saw, it was the smile of a captive in a strange uncomprehended world, more a dream than a reality.

"Mrs. Mazarine, welcome," said the Mayor after an abashed pause. "We're proud of this town, but we'll be prouder still, now you've come."

The girl-wife smiled again. At the same time it was as though she glanced apprehensively out of the corner of her eye at the old man by her side, as she said:

"Thank you. There seems to be plenty of room for us out here, so we needn't get into each other's way. . . . I've never been on the prairie before," she added.

The Young Doctor realized that her reply had meanings which would escape the understanding of the Mayor, and her apprehensive glance had told him of the gruesome jealousy of this old man at her side. The Mayor's polite words had caused the long, clean-shaven upper lip of the old man with the look of a debauched prophet, to lengthen surlily; and he noticed that a wide, flat foot in a big knee-boot, inside trousers too short, tapped the ground impatiently.

"We must be getting on to Mayo," said a voice that seemed to force its way through bronchial obstructions. "Come, Mrs. Mazarine."

He laid a big, flat, tropical hand, which gave the impression of being splayed, on the girl's shoulder. The gallant words of the Mayor—a chivalrous mountain-man—had set dark elements of human nature working. As the new master of Mayo stepped forward, the Young Doctor could not help noticing how large and hairy were the ears that stood far out from the saturnine head. It was a huge, steel-twisted, primitive man, who somehow gave the impression of an immense gorilla. The face was repulsive in its combination of surly smugness, as shown by the long upper lip, by a repellent darkness round the small, furtive

eyes, by a hardness in the huge, bearded jaw, and by a nose and mouth of primary animalism.

The Mayor caught sight of the Young Doctor, and he stopped the incongruous pair as they moved to the station doorway, the girl in front, as though driven.

"Mr. Mazarine, you've got to know the man who counts for more in Askatoon than anybody else; Doctor, you've got to know Mr. Mazarine," said the generous Mayor.

Repugnance was in full possession of the Young Doctor, but he was scientific and he was philosophic, if nothing else. He shook hands with Mazarine deliberately. If he could prevent it, there should be, where he was concerned, no jealousy, such as Mazarine had shown towards the Mayor, in connection with this helpless, exquisite creature in the grip of hard fate. Shaking hands with the girl with only a casual politeness in his glance, he felt a sudden eager, clinging clasp of her fingers. It was like lightning, and it was gone like lightning, as was the look that flashed between them. Somehow the girl instinctively felt the nature of the man, and in spirit flew to him for protection. No one saw the swift look, and in it there was nothing which spoke of youth or heart, of the feeling of man for woman or woman for man; but only the longing for help on the girl's part, vague and undefined as it was. On the man's part there was a soul whose gift and duty were healing. As the two passed on, the Young Doctor looked around him at the exclaiming crowd, for few had left the station when the train rolled out. Curiosity was an obsession with the people of Askatoon.

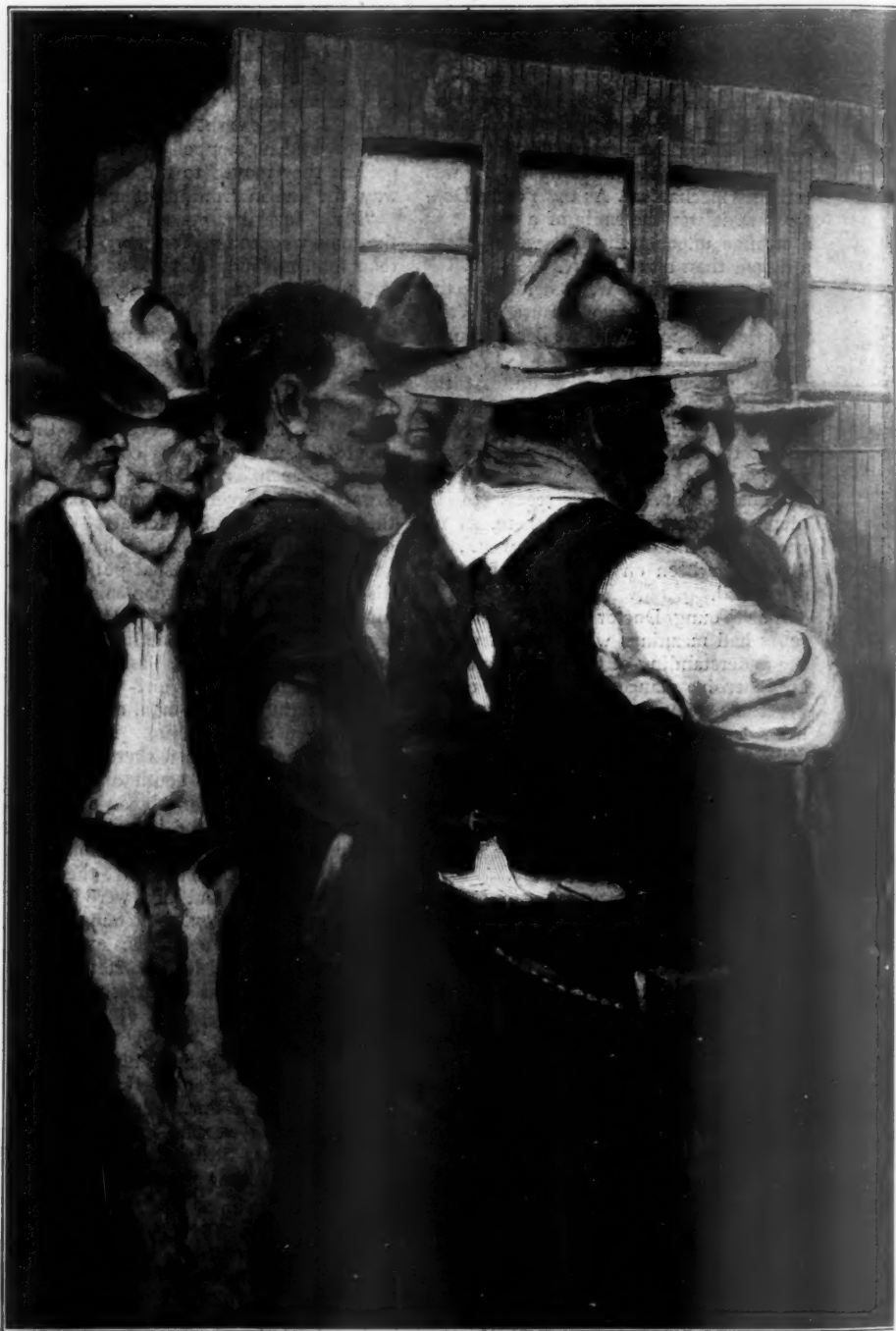
"Well, I never!" said round-faced Mrs. Skinner, with huge hips and gray curls. "Did you ever see the like!"

"I call it a shame," declared an indignant young woman, gripping tighter the hand of her little child, the daughter of a young butcher of twenty-three years of age.

"Poor lamb!" another motherly voice said.

"She ought to be ashamed of herself—money, I suppose," sneered Ellen Banner, a sour-faced shopkeeper's daughter, who had taught in Sunday





When the prophet-bearded, huge, swarthy-faced Joel Mazarine, with a beautiful young girl behind him, stepped from the through Askatoon. "Hell—that old



West-bound train, and was greeted by the Mayor, who was one of the executors of Michael Turley's will, a shiver passed  
"whale and her!" growled Jonas Billings.

school for twenty years and was still single.

"Beauty and the beast," remarked the Young Doctor to himself, as he saw the two drive away, Patsy Kernaghan running beside the wagon, evidently trying to make friends with the mastodon of Mayo.

## CHAPTER II

### "MY NAME IS LOUISE"

ASKATOON never included the Mazarines in its social scheme. Certainly Mayo was some distance from the town, but, apart from that, the newcomers remained incongruous, isolated, alien and alone. The handsome, inanimate girl-wife never appeared by herself in the streets of Askatoon, but always in the company of her masterful and morose husband, whose only human association seemed to be his membership in the Methodist body so prominent in the town. Every Sunday morning he tied his pair of bay horses with the covered buggy to the hitching-post in the church-shed and marched his wife to the very front seat in the meeting-house, having taken possession of it on his first visit, as though it had no other claimants. Subsequently he held it in solitary control, because other members of the congregation, feeling his repugnance to companionship, gave him the isolation he desired. As a rule he and his wife left the building before the last hymn was sung, so avoiding conversation. Now and again he stayed to a prayer-meeting and, doing so, invariably "led in prayer," to a very limited chorus of "Amen." For in spite of the position which Mayo conferred on its owner, there was a natural shrinking from "that wild boar," as outspoken Sister Skinner called him in the presence of the puzzled and troubled Minister.

This was always a time of pained confusion for the girl-wife. She had never "got religion," and there was something startling to her undeveloped nature in the thunderous apostrophes, in terms of the oldest part of the Old Testament, used by her tyrant when he wrestled with the Lord in prayer.

These were perhaps the only times when her face was the mirror of her confused, vague and troubled youth. Captive in a world bounded by a man's will, she simply did not begin to understand this strange and overpowering creature who had taken possession of her body, mind and soul. She trembled and hesitated before every cave of mystery which her daily life with him opened darkly to her abashed eyes. She felt herself going round and round and round in a circle, not forlorn enough to rebel or break away, but dazed and wondering and shrinking. She was like one robbed of will, made mechanical by a stern conformity to imposed rules of life and conduct. There were women in Askatoon who were sorry for her and made efforts to get near her; but whether it was the Methodist Minister or his wife, or the most voluble sister of the prayer-meeting, none got beyond the threshold of Mayo, as it were.

The girl-wife abashed them. She was as one who automatically spoke as she was told to speak, did what she was told to do. Yet she always smiled at the visitors when they came, or when she saw them and others at the meeting-house. It was, however, never a smile for an individual, whoever that individual might happen to be. It was only the kindness of her nature expressing itself. Talking seemed like the exercise of a foreign language to her, but her smiling was free and unconstrained, and it belonged to all, without distinction or selection or individuality.

The Young Doctor, looking at her one day as she sat in a buggy while her monster-man was inside the chemist's shop, said to himself:

"Sterilized! Absolutely, shamefully sterilized! But suppose she wakes up suddenly out of that dream between life and death—what will happen?"

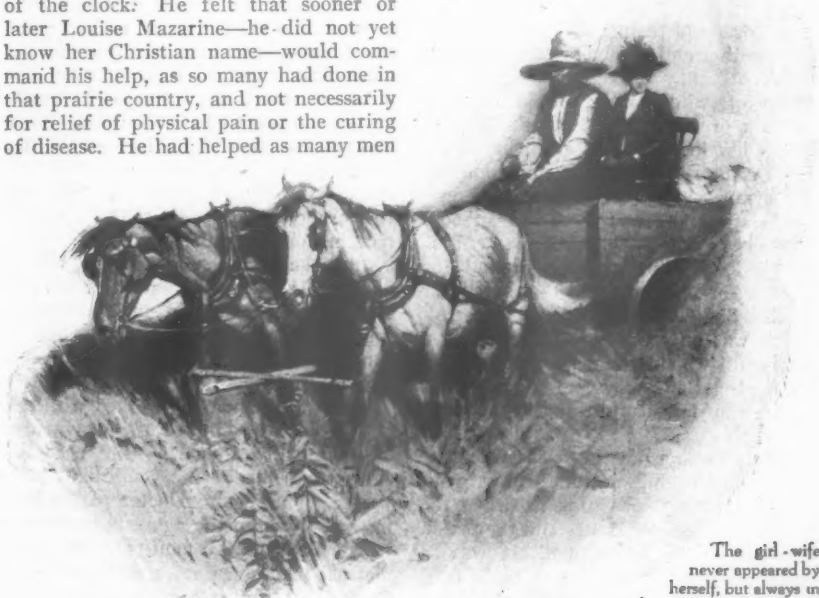
He remembered that curious, sudden, delicate catch of his palm on the day when they first shook hands at the railway-station, and to him it was like the flutter of life in a thing which seemed dead. How often he had noticed it in man and animal on the verge of extinction! He had not mistaken that fluttering appeal of her fingers. He was young

enough to translate it into flattering terms of emotion, but he did not do so. He was fancy-free himself, and the time would come when he would do a tremendous thing where a woman was concerned, a woman in something the same position as this poor girl; but that shaking, thrilling thing was still far off from him. For this child he only felt the healer's desire to heal.

He was one of those men who never force an issue; he never hastened a situation; he never put forward the hands of the clock: He felt that sooner or later Louise Mazarine—he did not yet know her Christian name—would command his help, as so many had done in that prairie country, and not necessarily for relief of physical pain or the curing of disease. He had helped as many men

in her passionless self neutralized even the native antagonisms of natural history. She had made the gloomy black cat and the light-hearted canary to be friends. Perhaps that came from an everlasting patience which her life had bred in her; perhaps it was some powerful gift exercised by one in touch with the remote, primitive things.

The Young Doctor had also seen her in the paddock with the horses, bare-



The girl-wife  
never appeared by  
herself, but always in  
the company of her morose  
and masterful husband.

and women mentally and morally as physically; the spirit of healing was behind everything he did. His world recognized it, and that was why he was never known by his name in all the district—he was only affectionately and admiringly called "The Young Doctor."

He had never been to Mayo since the Mazarines had arrived, though he had passed it often and had sometimes seen Louise in the garden with her dog, her black cat and her bright canary. The combination of the cat and the canary did not seem incongruous where she was concerned; it was as though something

headed, lithe and so girlishly slim, with none of the unmistakable if elusive lines belonging to the maturity which marriage brings. He had taken off his hat to her in the distance, but she had never waved a hand in reply. She only stood and gazed at him, and her look followed him long after he passed by. He knew well that in the gaze was nothing of the interest which a woman feels in a man; it was the look of one chained to a rock, who sees a Samaritan in the cheerless distance.

In the daily round of her life she was always busy; not restlessly, but con-

stantly, and always silently, busy. She was even more silent than her laconic half-breed hired woman, Rada. There was no talk with her gloating husband which was not monosyllabic. Her canary sang, but no music ever broke from her own lips. She murmured over her lovely yellow companion; she kissed it, pleaded with it for more song, but the only music at her own lips was the occasional music of her voice; and it had a remote and colorless quality which, though gentle, had none of the eloquence and warmth of youth.

In form and feature she was one made for emotion and demonstration, and the passionate play of the innocent enterprises of wild youth; but there was nothing of that in her. Gray age had drunk her life and had given her nothing in return—neither companionship nor sympathy nor understanding; only the belated hunger of a coarse manhood. Her obedience to the supreme will of her jealous jailor gave no ground for scolding or reproach, and that saved her much. She was even quietly cheerful, but it was only the pale reflection of a lost youth which would have been buoyant and gallant, gay and glad, had it been given the natural thing in the natural world.

There came a day, however, when the long, unchanging routine, gray with prison grayness, was broken; when the round of household duties and the prison discipline were interrupted. It was as sudden as a storm in the tropics, as final and as fateful as birth or death. That day she was taken suddenly and acutely ill. It was only a temporary malady, an agonizing pain which had its origin in a sudden chill. This chill was due, as the Young Doctor knew when he came, to a vitality which did not renew itself, which got nothing from the life to which it was sealed, which for some reason could not absorb energy from the stinging, vital life of the prairie world in the June-time.

In her sudden anguish, and in the absence of Joel Mazarine, she sent for the Young Doctor. That in itself was courageous, because it was impossible to tell what view the master of Mayo would take of her action, ill though she was.

She was not supposed to exercise her will. If Joel Mazarine had been at home, he would have sent for wheezy, decrepit old Doctor Gensing, whose practice the Young Doctor had completely absorbed over a series of years.

But the Young Doctor came. Rada, the half-breed woman, had undressed Louise and put her to bed; and he found her white as snow at the end of a paroxysm of pain, her long eyelashes lying on a cheek as smooth as a piece of Satsuma ware which has had the loving polish of ten thousand friendly fingers over innumerable years. When he came and stood beside her bed, she put out her hand slowly toward him. As he took it in his warm, firm, reassuring grasp, he felt the same fluttering appeal which had marked their hand-clasp on the day of their first meeting at the railway-station. Looking at the huge bed and the rancher-farmer's coarse clothes hanging on pegs, the big greased boots against the wall, a sudden savage feeling of disgust and indignation took possession of him; but the spirit of healing immediately assumed control, and he concentrated himself upon the instant duty before him.

For a whole hour he worked with her, and at length subdued the convulsions of pain which distorted the beautiful face and made the childlike body writhe. The Young Doctor had a feeling of resentment against the crime which had been committed. Marriage had not made her into a woman; it had driven her back into an arrested youth. It was as though she ought to have worn short skirts and her hair in a long braid down her back. Hers was the body of a young boy. When she was free from pain, and the color had come back to her cheeks a little, she smiled at him, and was about to put out her hand as a child might to a brother or a father, when suddenly a shadow stole into her eyes and crept across her face, and she drew her clenched hand close to her body. Still, she tried to smile at him.

His quiet, impersonal, though friendly look soothed her.

"Am I very sick?" she asked.

He shook his head and smiled. "You'll be all right to-morrow, I hope."

"That's too bad," she remarked. "I would like to be so sick that I couldn't think of anything else. My father used to say that the world was only the size of four walls to a sick person."

"I can't promise you so small a world," remarked the Young Doctor with a kind smile, his arm resting on the side of the bed, his chair drawn alongside. "You will have to face the whole universe to-morrow, same as ever."

She looked perplexed a moment and then said to him: "I used to think it was a beautiful world, and they try to make me think it is yet; but it isn't."

"Who try to make you?" he asked.

"Oh, my bird Richard, and Nigs the black cat, and the gray mare," she replied.

Her eyes closed, then opened strangely wide upon him in a curious, eager, staring appeal.

"Don't you want to know about me?" she asked. "I want to tell you—I want to tell you. I'm tired of telling it all over to myself."

The Young Doctor did not want to know. As a doctor he did not want to know.

"Not now," he said firmly. "Tell me when I come again."

A look of pain came into her face. "But who can tell when you'll come again?" she pleaded.

"When I will things to be, they generally happen," the Young Doctor answered in a commonplace tone. "You are my patient now, and I must keep an eye on you. So I'll come."

Again, with an almost spasmodical movement toward him, she said:

"I must tell you. I wanted to tell you the first day I saw you. You seemed the same kind of man my father was. My name's Louise. It was my mother made me do it. There was a mortgage—I was only sixteen. It's three years ago. He said to my mother he'd tear up the mortgage if I married him. That's why I'm here with him—Mrs. Mazarine. But my name's Louise."

"Yes, yes, I understand," the Young Doctor answered soothingly. "But you must not talk of it now. I understand perfectly. Tell me all about it another time."

"You don't think I should have—" She paused.

"Of course. I tell you I understand. Now you must be quiet. Drink this." He got up and poured some liquid into a glass.

At that moment there was a noise below in the hall.

"That's my husband," the girl-wife said, and the old wan captive-look came into her face.

"That's all right," replied the Young Doctor. "He'll find you better."

At that moment the half-breed woman entered the room. "He's here," she said, and came towards the bed.

"That old woman has sense," the Young Doctor murmured to himself. "She knows her man."

A minute later old Joel Mazarine was in the room, and he saw the half-breed woman lift his wife's head, while the Young Doctor held a glass to her lips.

"What's all this?" Mazarine said roughly. "What—?" He stopped suddenly, for the Young Doctor faced him sharply.

"She must be left alone," he said firmly and quietly, his eyes fastening the old man's eyes; and there was that in them which would not be gainsaid. "I have just given her medicine. She has been in great pain. We are not needed here now." He motioned towards the door. "She must be left alone."

For an instant it seemed that the old man was going to resist the dictation; but presently, after a close, scrutinizing look at the still, shrinking figure in the bed, he swung round, left the room and descended the stairs, the Young Doctor following.

### CHAPTER III

#### "I HAVE FOUGHT WITH BEASTS AT EPHESUS"

THE old man led the way outside the house, as though to be rid of his visitor as soon as possible. This was so obvious that, for an instant, the Young Doctor was disposed to try conclusions with the old slaver, and summon him back to the dining-room. The Mazarine sort of man always roused fighting, mas-



terful forces in him. He was never averse to a contest of wills, and he had had much of it; it was inseparable from his methods of healing. He knew that nine people out of ten never gave a true history of their physical troubles, never told their whole story: first because they had no gift for reporting, no observation; and also because the physical ailments of most of them were aggravated or induced by mental troubles or anxieties. Then it was that he imposed himself; as it were, fought the deceiver and his deceit, or the ignorant one and his ignorance; and numbers of people, under his sympathetic, wordless inquiry, his voiceless human cross-examination, poured their sorrows or perplexities into his ears, as this girl-wife upstairs had tried to do.

When the old man turned to face him in the sunlight, his boots soiled with dust and manure, his long upper lip feeling about over the lower lip and its shaggy growth of beard like some sea-monster feeling for its prey, the Young Doctor had a sensation of uncompromising rancor. His mind flashed to that upstairs room, where a comely captive creature was lying not an arm's-length from the coats and trousers and greasy waistcoats of this barbarian. Somehow that row of tenantless clothes, and the top-boots, greased with tallow, standing against the wall, were more characteristic of the situation than the old land-leviathan himself, blinking his beady, greenish eyes at the Young Doctor. That everlasting blinking was a repulsive characteristic; it was like serpents gulping live things.

"What's the matter with her?" the old man asked, jerking his head toward the upper window.

The Young Doctor explained quickly the immediate trouble, and then added:

"But it would not have taken hold of her so if she was not run down. She is not in a condition to resist. When her system exhausts, it does not refill, as it were."

"What sort of dictionary talk is that? Run down—here!" The old man sniffed the air like an ancient sow. "Run down—in this life, with the best of food, warm weather, and more ozone than a

sailor gets at sea! It's an insult to Jehovah, such nonsense." Moroseness grew with every word; the long upper lip became more sulkily active.

"Mr. Mazarine," rejoined the Young Doctor with ominous determination in his eye, "you know a good deal, I should think, about spring wheat and fall ploughing, about making sows fat, or burning fallow land—that's your trade, and I shouldn't want to challenge you on it all; also you know when to give a horse bran-mash, or a heifer saltpeter, but—well, I know my job in the same way. They will tell you, about here, that I have a kind of hobby for keeping people from digging and crawling into their own graves. That's my business, and the habit of saving human life, because you're paid for it, becomes in time a habit of saving human life for its very own sake. I warn you—and I suppose it's a matter of some concern to you—Mrs. Mazarine is in a bad way."

Resentful and incredulous, the old man was about to speak, but the Young Doctor made an arresting gesture, and added:

"She has very little strength to go on with. She ought to be plump; her pulses ought to beat hard; her cheeks ought to be rosy; she should walk with a spring and be strong and steady as a soldier on the march; but she is none of these things, can do none of these things. You've got a thousand things to do, and you do them because you want to do them. There is something making new life in you all the time, but Mrs. Mazarine makes no new life as she goes on. Every day is taking something out of her, and there's nothing being renewed. Sometimes neither good food nor ozone is enough; and you've got to take care, or you'll lose Mrs. Mazarine." He could not induce himself to speak of her as "wife."

For a moment the unwholesome mouth seemed to be chewing unpleasant herbs, and the beady eyes blinked viciously.

"I'm not swallowin' your meaning," Mazarine said at last. "I never studied Greek. If a person is afflicted with a disease, there it is, and you can deal with it or not; but if a person hasn't no disease, then it's chicanery—chicanery."



Doctors talk a lot of gibberish these here days. What I want to know is, has my wife got a disease? I haven't observed any signs. Is it Bright's, or cancer, or the lungs, or the liver, or the kidneys, or the heart, or what's its name?"

The Young Doctor had an impulse to flay the soulless heathen, but for the girl-wife's sake he forbore.

"I don't think it is any of those troubles," he replied smoothly. "She needs a thorough examination. But one thing is clear: she is wasting; she is losing ground instead of going ahead. There's a malignant influence somewhere. She's standing still, and to stand still in youth is fatal. I can imagine you don't want to lose her, eh?"

The Young Doctor's gray-blue eyes endeavored to hold the blinking beads under the shaggy eyebrows long enough to get control of a mind which had the cunning and cruelty of an animal possessed by its own fierce loves and passions. He succeeded.

The old man would a thousand times rather his wife lived than died. In the first place, to lose her was to sacrifice that which he had paid for dearly—a mortgage of ten thousand dollars torn up. Louise Mazarine represented that to him first—ten thousand dollars. Secondly, she was worth it in every way. He had what hosts of others would be glad to have—men younger and better looking than himself. She represented the triumph of age. He had lived his life; he had buried two wives; he had had children; he had made money; and yet here, when other men of his years were thinking of making wills, and eating porridge, and waiting for the Dark Policeman to come and arrest them for loitering, he was left a magnificent piece of property like Mayo; and he had all the sources of pleasure open to a young man walking the primrose path. He was living right up to the last. Both his wives were gray-headed when they died—it turned them gray to live with him; both had died before they were fifty; and here he was the sole owner of a wonderful young head, with hair that reached to the waist, with lips like cool fruit from an orchard-tree, and the indescribable charm of

youth and loveliness which the young itself never really understood. That was what he used to say to himself: it was only age could appreciate youth and beauty; youth did not understand.

Thus the Young Doctor's question roused in him something at once savage and apprehensive. Of course he wanted Louise to live. Why should she not live?

"Doesn't any husband want his wife to live!" he answered sullenly. "But I want to know what ails her. What medicine you going to give her?"

"I don't know," the Young Doctor replied meditatively. "When she is quite rid of this attack, I'll examine her again and let you know."

Suddenly there shot into the greenish old eyes a reddish look of rage; jealousy, horrible, gruesome jealousy, took possession of Joel Mazarine. This young man to come in and go out of his wife's bedroom, to— Why weren't there women doctors? He would get one over from the Coast, or from Winnipeg, or else there was old Doctor Gensing, in Aska-toon—who was seventy-five at least. He would call him in and get rid of this offensive young pill-maker.

"I don't believe there's anything the matter with her," he declared stubbornly. "She's been healthy as a woman can be, living this life here. What's her disease? I've asked you. What is it?"

The Young Doctor laid a hand on himself, and in the colorless voice of the expert, said: "Old age—that's her trouble, so far as I can see."

He paused, anticipating the ferocious look which swept into the repulsive face, and the clenching of the big splaylike hands. Then in a soothing, reflective kind of voice he added:

"Senile decay—you know all about that. Well, now, it happens sometimes—not often, but it does happen sometimes—that a very young person for some cause or another suffers from senile decay. Some terrible leakage of youth occurs. It has been cured, though, and I've cured one or two cases myself."

He was almost prevaricating—but in a good cause. "Mrs. Mazarine's is a case which can be cured, I think," he continued. "As you've remarked, Mr. Maz-



Olando Guise did not look like a real cowpuncher. He had the appearance of being dressed for the part . . . Yet on this particular day, he seemed more than usual the scil-touched son of the prairie.

arine,"—his voice was now persuasive,—  
"here is fine air, and a good, comfortable home—"

Suddenly he broke off, and as though in innocent inquiry said: "Now, has she too much to do? Has she sufficient help in the house for one so young?"

"She doesn't do more than's good for her," answered the old man, "and there's the half-breed hired critter—you've seen her—and a Chinaman too. That ought to be enough," he added scornfully.

The Young Doctor seemed to reflect, and his face became very urbane, because he saw that he must proceed warily, if he was to be of service to his new patient.

"Yes," he said emphatically, "she certainly appears to have help enough. I must think over her case and see her again to-morrow."

The old man's look suddenly darkened. "Aint she better?" he asked.

"She's not so much better that there's no danger of her being worse," the Young Doctor replied decisively. "I certainly must see her to-morrow."

"Why," the old man remarked, waving his splayed hand up and down in a gesture of emphasis and persuasion, "she's never been sick. She's in and out of this house all day. She goes about with her animals like as if she hadn't a care or an ache or pain in the world. I've heard of women that fancied they was sick because they hadn't too much to do, and was too well off, and was treated too well. Highsterics, they call it. Lots of women, lots and lots of them, would be glad to have such a home as this, and would stay healthy in it."

The Young Doctor felt he had made headway, and he let it go at that. It was clear he was to be permitted to come to-morrow. "Yes, it's a fine place," he replied convincingly. "Four thousand acres is a mighty big place when you've got farm-land as well as cattle-grazing."

"It's nearly all good farm-land," answered the old man with decision. "I don't believe much in ranching or cattle. I'm for the plough and the wheat. There's more danger from cattle-disease than there is from bad crops. I'm getting rid of my cattle. I expect to sell a lot of them to-day." An avaricious and

unpleasant smile of satisfaction drew down the corners of his lips. "I've got a good customer. He ought to be on the trail now." He drew out a huge silver watch. "Yes, he's due. The party's a foreigner, I believe. He lives over at Slow Down Ranch—got a French name."

"Oh, Giggles!" said the Young Doctor with a quick smile.

The old man shook his hippopotamus head: "No, that isn't the name. It's Guise—Orlando Guise is the name."

"Same thing," remarked the Young Doctor. "They call him Giggles for short. You've seen him, of course?"

"No, I've been dealing with him so far through a third party. Why's he called Giggles?" asked the master of Mayo.

"Well, you'll know when you see him. He's not cut according to everybody's measure. If you're dealing with him, don't think him a fool because he chirrups, and don't size him up according to his looks. He's a dude. Some call him The Duke, but mostly he's known as Giggles."

"Fools weary me," grumbled the other.

"Well, as I said, you mustn't begin dealing with him on the basis of his looks. Looks don't often tell the truth. For instance, you're known as a Christian and a Methodist!" The Young Doctor looked the old man slowly up and down, and in anyone else it would have seemed the grossest insolence, but his placidity and the urbane smile at his lips belied the malice of his words. "Well, you know you don't look like a Methodist. You look like,"—innocence showed in his eye; there was no ulterior purpose in his face,—"you look like one of the bad McMahan lot of claim-jumpers over there in the foothills. I suppose that seems so, only because ranchmen aren't generally pious. Well, in the same way, Giggles doesn't really look like a ranchman; but he's every bit as good a ranchman as you are a Christian and a Methodist!"

The Young Doctor looked the old man in the face with such a semblance of honesty that he succeeded in disarming a dangerous suspicion of satire or mock-

ery — dangerous, if he was to continue family physician at Mayo. "Ah," he suddenly remarked, "there comes Orlando now!" He pointed to a spot about half a mile away, where a horseman could be seen cantering slowly towards Mayo.

A moment afterwards, from his buggy, the Young Doctor said: "Mrs. Mazarine must be left alone until I see her again. She must have repose and not be disturbed. The half-breed woman can look after her. I've told her what to do. You'll keep to another room, of course."

"There's a bunk in that room where I could sleep," said the other, with a note of protest.

"I'm afraid that, in our patient's interest, you must do what I say," insisted the Young Doctor with a friendly smile which caused him a great effort. "If I make her bloom again, that will suit you, wont it?"

A look of gloating came into the behemoth's eyes: "Let it go at that," he said. "Mebbe I'll take her over to the sea before the wheat-harvest."

Out on the Askatoon trail, the Young Doctor ruminated over what he had seen and heard at Mayo.

"That old geezer will get an awful jolt one day," he said to himself. "If that girl should wake! Her eyes—if somebody comes along and draws the curtains! She hasn't the least idea of where she is or what it all means. All she knows is that she's a prisoner in some strange, savage country and doesn't know its language or anybody at all—as though she'd lost her memory. Any fellow, young, handsome and with enough dash and color to make him romantic could do it.... Poor little robin in the snow!" he added, and looked back toward Mayo.

As he did so, the man from Slow Down Ranch cantering towards Mayo caught his eye.

"Louise—Orlando," he said musingly; then, with a sudden flick of the reins on his horse's back, he added abruptly, almost sternly, "By the great horn spoons, no!"

Thus when his prophecy took concrete form, he revolted from it. A grave look came into his face.

## CHAPTER IV

### TWO SIDES TO A BARGAIN

AS the Young Doctor had said, Orlando Guise did not look like a real, bona fide, simon-pure "cowpuncher." He had the appearance of being dressed for the part, like an actor who has never mounted a cayuse, in a Wild West play. Yet on this particular day,—when the whole prairie country was alive with light, thrilling with elixir from the bottle of old Eden's vintage, and as warm and comfortable as a garden where upon a red wall the peach-vines cling,—he seemed far more than usual the close-fitting, soil-touched son of the prairie. His wide felt hat, turned up on one side like a trooper's, was well back on his head; his pinkish brown face was freely taking the sun, and his clear, light-blue eyes gazed ahead unblinking in the strong light. His forehead was unwrinkled—a rare thing in that prairie country where the dry air corrugates the skin; his light-brown hair curled loosely on the brow, graduating back to closer, crisper curls which in their thickness made a kind of furry cap. It was like the coat of a French poodle, so glossy and so companionable was it to the head. A bright handkerchief of scarlet was tied loosely around his throat, which was even a little more bare than was the average ranchman's; and his thick, much-pocketed flannel shirt, worn in place of a waistcoat and coat, was of a shade of red which contrasted and yet harmonized with the scarlet of the neckerchief. He did not wear the sheepskin leggins so common among the ranchmen of the West, but a pair of yellowish corduroy riding-breeches, with boots that laced from the ankle to the knee. These boots had that touch of the theatrical which made him more fantastic than original in the eyes of his fellow-citizens.

Also he wore a ring with a star-sapphire, which made him incongruous, showy and foppish, and that was a thing not easy of forgiveness in the West. Certainly the West would not have tolerated him as far as it did, had it not been for three things: the extraordinary good nature which made him giggle; the

fact that on more than one occasion he had given almost conclusive evidence that he was unconcernedly brave; and the knowledge that he was at least well-to-do. In a kind of vague way people had come reluctantly to realize that his giggles were the accompaniment of a nature without guile and recklessly frank.

"He beats the band," Jonas Billings, the livery-stable keeper had said of him; while Burlingame, the pernicious lawyer of shady character, had remarked that he had the name of an impostor and the frame of a fop; but he wasn't sure as a lawyer that he'd seen all the papers in the case—which was tantamount to saying that the Orlando nut needed some cracking.

It was generally agreed that his name was ridiculous, romantic and unreasonable. It seemed to challenge public opinion. Most names in the West were without any picturesqueness or color; they were commonplace and almost geometric in their form, more like numbers to represent people than things of character in themselves. There were names semi-scriptural and semi-foreign in Askatoot, but no name like Orlando Guise had ever come that way before, and nothing like the man himself had ever ridden the Askatoot trails. One thing had to be said, however; he rode the trail like a broncho-buster, and he sat his horse as though he had been born in the saddle. On this particular day, in spite of his garish "get-up," he seemed absolutely to belong to the life in which he was cheerfully and light-heartedly whistling a solo from one of Meyerbeer's operas. Meyerbeer was certainly incongruous to the prairie, but it and the whistling were in keeping with the man himself.

Over on Slow Down Ranch there lived a curious old lady who wore a bonnet of Sweet Sixteen of the time of the Crimea, and with a sense of color which would wreck the reputation of a kaleidoscope. She it was who had taught her son Orlando the tunefulness of Meyerbeer and Balfe and Offenbach, and the operatic jingles of that type of composer. Orlando Guise had come by his outward showiness naturally. Yet he

was not like his mother save in this particular. His mother was flighty and had no sense, while he, behind the gaiety of his wardrobe and his giggles, had very much sense of a quite original kind. Even as he whistled Meyerbeer, riding towards Mayo, his eyes had a look of one who was trying to see into things; and his lips, when the whistling ceased, had a cheerful pucker which seemed to show that he had seen what he wanted.

"Wonder if I'll get a glimpse of the so-called Mrs. Mazarine," he said aloud. "Bad enough to marry a back-timer, but to marry Mazarine—they don't say she's blind, either! Money—what wont we do for money, Mary? But if she's as young as they say, she could have waited a bit for the oof-bird to fly her way. Lots of men have money as well as looks. Anyhow, I'm ready to take his cattle off his hands on a fair, square deal, and if his girl-missis is what they say, I wouldn't mind—"

Having said this, he giggled and giggled again at his unspoken impertinence. He knew he had almost said something fatuous, but the suppressed idea appealed to him, nevertheless; for somehow, whatever he did, he always had a vision of doing something else; and wherever he was, he was always imagining himself to be somewhere else. That was the strain of romance in him which came from his mixed ancestry. It was the froth and bubble of a dreamer's legacy, which had made his mother, always romantic and unconsciously theatrical, have a vision of a life on the prairies, with the white mountains in the distance, where her beloved son would be master of a vast domain, over which he should ride like one of Cortez' conquistadores. Having "money to burn," she had, at a fortunate moment, bought the ranch which, by accident, had done well from the start, and bade fair, through the giggling astuteness of her spectacular son, to do far better still by design.

On the first day of their arrival at Slow Down Ranch, the mother had presented Orlando with a most magnificent Mexican bridle and head-stall covered with silver conchs, and a saddle with stirrups inlaid with both silver and gold.



Wherefore, it was no wonder that most people stared and wondered, while some sneered and some even hated. On the whole, however, Orlando Guise was in the way of making a place for himself in the West in spite of natural drawbacks.

OLD Mazarine did not merely sneer as he saw the gay cavalier approach; he snorted; and he would have used a blasphemous expletive if he had not been a professing Christian.

"Circus rider!" he said to himself. "Wants taking down some, and he's come to the right place to get what he wants."

On his part, Orlando Guise showed his dislike of the repellent figure by a brusque giggle and further expressed what was in his mind by the one word: "Turk!"

His repugnance, however, was balanced by something possessing the old man still more alien and disagreeable. Like a malignant liquid, there crept up through Joel Mazarine's body to the roots of his hair the ancient virus of Cain. It was jealous, ravenous, grim: old age hating the rich, robust, panting youth of the man before him. Was it that being half man, half beast, he had some animal instinct concerning this young rough-rider before him? Did he in some vague, prescient way associate this gaudy newcomer with his girl-wife? He could not himself have said. Primitive passions are corporate of many feelings but of little sight.

As Orlando Guise slid from his horse, Joel Mazarine steadied himself and said: "Come about the cattle? Ready to buy and pay cash down?"

Orlando Guise giggled.

"What are you sniggering at?" snorted the old man.

"I thought it was understood that if I liked the bunch I was to pay cash," Orlando replied. "I've got a good report of the beasts, but I want to look them over. My head cattleman told you what I'd do. That's why I smiled. Funny, too: you don't look like a man who'd talk more than was wanted." He giggled again.

"Fool—I'll make you laugh on the other side of your mouth!" the Master

of Mayo said to himself; and then he motioned to where a bunch of a hundred or so cattle were grazing in a little dip of the country between Askatoon and Mayo. "I'll get my buckboard. It's all hitched up and ready, and we can get down and see them right now," he said aloud.

"Wont you find it rough going on the buckboard? Better ride," remarked Orlando Guise.

"I don't ever notice rough going," grunted the old man. "Some people ride horses to show themselves off; I ride a buckboard because it suits me."

Orlando Guise chirruped. "Say, we mustn't get scrapping," he said gayly. "We've got to make a bargain."

In a few moments they were sweeping across the prairie, and sure enough the buckboard bumped, tumbled and plunged into the holes of the gophers, the coyotes and prairie dogs, but the old man sat the seat of the buckboard with the tenacity of a gorilla clinging to the branch of a tree.

IN about three quarters of an hour the two returned to Mayo, and in front of the house the final bargaining took place. There was a difference of five hundred dollars between them, and the old man fought vigorously and stubbornly for it; and though Orlando giggled, it was clear he was no fool at a bargain, and that he had many resources. At last he threw doubt upon the pedigree of a bull. With a snarl Mazarine strode into the house. He had that pedigree, and it was indisputable. He would show the young swaggerer that he could not be caught anywhere in this game.

As Joel Mazarine entered the doorway of the house, Orlando giggled again, because he had two or three other useful traps ready, and this was really like baiting a bull. Every thrust made this bull more angry; and Orlando knew that if he became angry enough he could bring things to a head with a device by which the old man would be forced to yield; for he did not want to buy, as much as Mazarine wished to sell.

The device, however, was never used, and Orlando ceased giggling suddenly, for chancing to glance up he saw a face



Orlando ceased giggling suddenly, for chancing to glance up, he saw a face at a window, pale, exquisite, delicate, with eyes that stared and stared at him as though he were a creature from some other world.



at a window, pale, exquisite, delicate, with eyes that stared and stared at him as though he were a creature from some other world.

Such a look he had never seen in anybody's eyes; such a look Louise Mazarine had never given in her life before. Something had drawn her out of her bed in spite of herself—a voice which was not that of old Joel Mazarine, but a new, fresh, vibrant voice which broke into little spells of inconsequent laughter. She loved inconsequent laughter, and never heard it at Mayo. She had crept from her bed and to the window, and before he saw her, she had watched him with a look which slowly became an awakening: as though curtains had been drawn aside and revealed a new, strange, thrilling world.

Louise Mazarine had seen something she had never seen before, because a feeling had been born in her which she had never felt. She had never fully known what sex was, or in any real sense what man meant. This romantic, gay, picturesque, buoyant figure of youth struck her as the rock was struck by Moses; and for the first time in all her days she was wholly alive. Also, for the first time in his life, Orlando Guise felt a wonder which in spite of the hereditary romance in him had never touched him before. Like *Ferdinand* and *Miranda* in "The Tempest," "they changed eyes."

A heavy step was heard coming through the hallway, and at once the exquisite, staring face at the window disappeared—while Orlando Guise turned his back upon the open doorway and walked a few steps toward the gate in an effort to recover himself. When he turned again to meet Mazarine, who had a paper in his hand, there was a flush on his cheek and a new light in his eye. The old man did not notice that, however, for his avaricious soul was concentrated upon the paper in his hand. He thrust it before Orlando's eyes.

"What you got to say to that, Mister?" he demanded.

Orlando appeared to examine the paper carefully, and presently he handed it back and said slowly: "That gives you the extra five hundred. It's a bargain." How suddenly he had capitulated!

"Cash?" asked the old man triumphantly. How should he know by what means Orlando had been conquered!

"I've got a check in my pocket. I'll fill it in."

"A check aint cash," growled the grizzly one.

"You can cash it in an hour. Come in to Askatoon, and I'll get you the cash with-it now," said Orlando.

"I can't. A man's coming for a stallion I want to sell. Give me a hundred dollars cash now to clinch the bargain, and I'll meet you at Askatoon to-morrow and get the whole of it in cash. I don't deal with banks. I pay hard money, and I get hard money. That's my rule."

"Well, you're in luck, for I've got a hundred dollars," answered Orlando. "I've just got that, and a dollar besides, in my pocket. To-morrow you go to my lawyer, Burlingame, at Askatoon, and you'll get the rest of the money. It will be there waiting for you."

"Cash?" pressed the old man.

"Certainly: Government hundred-dollar bills. Give me a receipt for this hundred dollars."

"Come inside," said the old man almost cheerfully. He loved having his own way. He was almost insanely self-willed. It did his dark soul good to triumph over this "circus rider."

As Joel Mazarine preceded him, Orlando looked up to the window again. For one swift instant the beautiful, pale face of the girl-wife appeared, and then vanished.

At the doorway of the house Orlando Guise stumbled. That was an unusual thing to happen to him. He was too athletic to step carelessly, and yet he stumbled and giggled. It was not a fatuous giggle, however. In it were all kinds of strange things.

**Follow the fortunes of Orlando and Louise and the Jungle-man in the next installment of "Wild Youth," in the August Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands July 23rd.**

# A Black Cat For Luck



*THE blithesome story of how Joseph-Reginald—that was the feline's name—brought the greatest luck in the world to young Mr. Boyd, of Chicago and Washington Square.*

By P. G. Wodehouse

Author of "Creatures of Impulse," "Brother Fans," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE PORTER HOSKINS

**H**E was black but comely. Obviously in reduced circumstances, he had nevertheless contrived to retain a certain smartness, a certain air—what the French call the *tournure*. Nor had poverty killed in him the aristocrat's instinct of personal cleanliness; for, even as Elizabeth caught sight of him, he began to wash himself.

At the sound of her step he looked up. He did not move, but there was suspicion in his attitude. The muscles of his back contracted; his eyes glowed like yellow lamps against black velvet; his tail switched a little, warningly.

Elizabeth looked at him. He looked at Elizabeth. There was a pause, while he summed her up. Then he stalked toward her, and, suddenly lowering his head, drove it vigorously against her dress. He permitted her to pick him up and carry him into the hallway, where Francis, the janitor, stood.

"Francis," said Elizabeth, "does this cat belong here?"

"No, miss. That cat's a stray, that cat is. I been trying to lo-*cate* that cat's owner for days."

Francis spent his time trying to lo-*cate* things. It was the one recreation of his eventless life. Sometimes it was a noise, sometimes a lost letter, sometimes a piece of ice which had gone astray in the dumbwaiter; whatever it was, Francis tried to lo-*cate* it.

"Has he been around here long, then?"

"I seen him snooping about considerable time."

"I shall keep him."

"Black cats bring luck," said Francis sententiously.

"I certainly sha'n't object to that," said Elizabeth.

She was feeling that morning that a little luck would be a pleasing novelty. Things had not been going well with her of late. It was not so much that the usual proportion of her manuscripts had come back with editorial compliments from the magazines to which they

had been sent—she accepted that as part of the game; what she did consider scurvy treatment at the hands of Fate was the fact that her own "pet" magazine, the one to which she had been accustomed to fly for refuge, almost sure of a welcome, when coldly treated by all the others, had suddenly expired with a low gurgle for want of public support. It was like losing a kind and open-handed relative, and it made the addition of a black cat to the household almost a necessity.

In her apartment, the door closed, she watched her new ally with some anxiety. He had behaved admirably on the journey upstairs, but she would not have been surprised, though it would have pained her, if he had now proceeded to try to escape through the ceiling. Cats were so emotional. However, he remained calm, and after padding silently about the room for a while, raised his head and uttered a crooning cry.

"That's right," said Elizabeth cordially. "If you don't see what you want, ask for it. The place is yours."

She went to the ice-box and produced milk and sardines. There was nothing finicky or affected about her guest. He concentrated himself on the restoration of his tissues with the purposeful air of one whose last meal is a dim memory. Elizabeth, brooding over him like a Providence, wrinkled her forehead in thought.

"Joseph," she said at last, brightening, "—that's your name. Now settle down and start being a mascot."

Joseph settled down amazingly. By the end of the second day he was conveying the impression that he was the owner of the apartment. Like most of his species, he was an autocrat. He waited a day to ascertain which was Elizabeth's favorite chair; then he appropriated it for his own. If Elizabeth closed a door while he was in a room, he wanted it opened so that he might go out; if she closed it while he was outside, he wanted it opened so that he might come in; if she left it open, he fussed about the draft. But the best of us have our faults, and Elizabeth adored him in spite of his.

It was astonishing what a difference

he made in her life. She was a friendly soul, and, until Joseph's arrival, she had to depend for company mainly on the footsteps of the man in the apartment across the way. Moreover, the building was an old one, and it creaked at night. There was a loose board in the passage which made burglar-noises in the dark behind you when you stepped on it on the way to bed, and there were funny scratching-sounds which made you jump and hold your breath. Joseph soon put a stop to all that. With Joseph around, a loose board became a loose board—nothing more—and a scratching-noise just a plain scratching-noise.

And then one afternoon he disappeared.

HAVING searched the apartment without finding the cat, Elizabeth went to the window, with the intention of making a bird's-eye survey of the street. She was not hopeful, for she had just come from the street, and there had been no sign of him then.

Outside the window was a broad ledge, running the width of the building. It terminated on the left in a shallow balcony belonging to the apartment whose front door faced hers—the apartment of the young man whose footsteps she sometimes heard. She knew he was a young man, because Francis had told her so. His name, James Renshaw Boyd, she had learned from the same source.

On this shallow balcony, jicking his fur with the tip of a crimson tongue and generally behaving as if he were in his own back yard, sat Joseph.

"Jo-seph!" cried Elizabeth, surprise, joy and reproach combining to give her voice an almost melodramatic quiver.

He looked at her coldly. Worse, he looked at her as if she were an utter stranger. Bulging with her meat and drink, he cut her dead; and, having done so, he turned and walked into the next apartment.

Elizabeth was a girl of spirit. Joseph might look at her as if she were a saucerful of tainted milk, but he was her cat, and she meant to get him back. She went out, and rang the bell of Mr. James Renshaw Boyd's apartment.

The door was opened by a shirt-sleeved young man. He was by no means an unsightly young man. Indeed, of his type,—the rough-haired, clean-shaven, square-jawed type,—he was a distinctly good-looking young man. Even though she was regarding him at the moment purely in the light of a machine for returning strayed cats, Elizabeth noticed that.

She smiled upon him. It was not the fault of this nice-looking young man that his sitting-room window was open, or that Joseph was an ungrateful little beast who should have no fish that night.

"Would you mind letting me have my cat, please?" she said pleasantly. "He has gone into your sitting-room through the window."

He looked faintly surprised.

"Your cat?"

"My black cat, Joseph. He is in your sitting-room."

"I'm afraid you have come to the wrong place. I've just left my sitting-room, and the only cat there is my black cat, Reginald."

"But I saw Joseph go in only a minute ago."

"That was Reginald."

For the first time, as one who, examining a fair shrub, abruptly discovers that it is poison-ivy, Elizabeth realized the truth. This was no innocent young man who stood before her, but the blackest criminal known to criminologists—a stealer of other people's cats. Her manner shot down to zero.

"May I ask how long you have had your Reginald?"

"Since four o'clock this afternoon."

"Did he come in through the window?"

"Why, yes, now you mention it, he did."

"I must ask you to be good enough to give me back my cat," said Elizabeth icily.

He regarded her defensively.

"Assuming," he said, "purely for the purposes of academic argument, that your Joseph is my Reginald, couldn't we come to an agreement of some sort? Let me buy you another cat—a dozen cats."

"I don't want a dozen cats. I want Joseph."

"Fine, fat, soft cats," he went on persuasively. "Lovely, affectionate Persians and Angoras and—"

"Of course, if you intend to steal Joseph—"

"Those are harsh words. Any lawyer will tell you that there are special statutes regarding cats. To retain a stray cat is not a tort for a malfeasance. In the celebrated test-case of Wiggins versus Bluebody, it was established—"

"Will you please give me back my cat?"

She stood facing him, her chin in the air and her eyes shining, and the young man suddenly felt a victim to conscience.

"Look here," he said, "I'll throw myself on your mercy. I admit the cat is your cat, and that I have no right to it, and that I am just a common sneak-thief. But consider: I had just come back from the first rehearsal of my first play; and, as I have no right to it, that cat walked in at the window. I'm superstitious, and I felt that to give him up would be equivalent to killing the play before ever it was produced. I know it will sound absurd to you. *You* have no idiotic superstitions. You are sane and practical. But, in the circumstances, if you *could* see your way to waiving your rights—"

Before the wistfulness of his eye Elizabeth capitulated. How she had misjudged him! She had taken him for an ordinary soulless pullover of cats, a snapper-up of cats at random and without reason; and all the time he had been reluctantly compelled to the act by this deep and praiseworthy motive. All the unselfishness and love of sacrifice innate in good women stirred within her.

"Why, of *course* you mustn't let him go. It would mean awful bad luck."

"But how about you?"

"Never mind about me. Think of all the people who are dependent on your play being a success."

The young man blinked.

"This is overwhelming," he said.

"I had no notion why you wanted him. He was nothing to me—at least, nothing much—that is to say—well, I suppose I was rather fond of him, but he was not—not—"

"Vital?"

"That's just the word I wanted. He was just company, you know."

"Haven't you many friends?"

"I haven't any friends."

"You haven't any friends! That settles it. You must take him, back."

"I couldn't think of it."

"But, good gracious, how do you suppose I should feel, knowing that you were all alone and that I had sneaked you—your ewe-lamb, as it were?"

"And how do you suppose I should feel if your play failed simply for lack of a black cat?"

He started, and ran his fingers through his rough hair in an overwrought manner.

"Solomon couldn't have solved this problem," he said. "How would it be—it seems the only possible way out—if you were to retain a sort of managerial right in him? Couldn't you sometimes step across and chat with him—and me, incidentally—over here? I'm very nearly as lonesome as you are. Chicago is my home. I hardly know a soul in New York."

Her solitary life in the big city had forced upon Elizabeth the ability to form instantaneous judgments on the men she met. She flashed a glance at the young man, and decided in his favor.

"It's very kind of you," she said. "I should love to. I want to hear all about your play. I write, myself, in a small way, so a successful playwright is Somebody to me."

"I wish I were a successful playwright."

"Well, you are having the first play you have ever written produced on Broadway. That's pretty wonderful."

"H'm—yes," said the young man. It seemed to Elizabeth that he spoke doubtfully, and this modesty consolidated the favorable impression she had formed.

THE gods are just. For every ill which they inflict they also supply a compensation. It seems good to them that individuals in big cities shall be lonely, but they have so arranged that, if one of these individuals does at last

contrive to seek out and form a friendship with another, that friendship shall grow more swiftly than the tepid acquaintanceships of those on whom the icy touch of loneliness has never fallen. Within a week Elizabeth was feeling that she had known this James Renshaw Boyd all her life.

And yet there was a tantalizing incompleteness about his personal reminiscences. Elizabeth was one of those persons who like to begin a friendship with a full statement of their position, their previous life, and the causes which led up to their being in this particular spot at this particular time. At their next meeting, before he had time to say much on his own account, she told him of the small Illinois town where she passed the early part of her life; of the rich and unexpected aunt who sent her to college for no particular reason that anyone could ascertain except that she enjoyed being unexpected; of the legacy from this same aunt, far smaller than might have been hoped for, but sufficient to send a grateful Elizabeth to New York, to try her luck there; of editors, magazines, manuscripts refused or accepted, plots for stories; of life in general, as lived down where the arch spans Fifth Avenue and the lighted cross of the Judson shines by night on Washington Square.

Ceasing eventually, she waited for him to begin. And he did not begin—not, that is to say, in the sense the word conveyed to Elizabeth. He spoke briefly of college, still more briefly of Chicago, which city he appeared to regard with a distaste that made Lot's attitude toward the Cities of the Plain almost kindly by comparison. Then, as if he had fulfilled the demands of the most exacting inquisitor in the matter of personal reminiscence, he began to speak of the play.

The only facts concerning him to which Elizabeth could really have sworn with a clear conscience at the end of the second week of their acquaintance were that he was very poor and that this play meant everything to him.

The statement that it meant everything to him insinuated itself so frequently into his conversation that it weighed on Elizabeth's mind like a bur-



Flushed, and more bitterly angry than she could ever have imagined herself capable of being, she tore herself away from him.



den, and by degrees she found herself giving the play place of honor in her thoughts over and above her own little ventures.

At an early stage in their friendship the young man told her the plot of the piece; and, if he had not unfortunately forgotten several important episodes and had to leap back to them across a gulf of one or two acts, and if he had referred to his characters by name instead of by such descriptions as "the fellow who's in love with the girl—not what's-his-name but the other chap," no doubt she would have got that mental half-Nelson on it which is such a help toward the proper understanding of a four-act comedy. As it was, his *précis* left her a little vague; but she said it was perfectly splendid, and he said, "Do you really think so?" and she, "Yes, I do," and both were happy.

REHEARSALS preyed on Mr. Boyd's spirits a good deal—at least so it seemed to Elizabeth. He attended them with the pathetic regularity of the young dramatist, but they appeared to bring him little balm. In the evening Elizabeth generally found him steeped in gloom, and then she would postpone the recital, to which she had been looking forward, of whatever little triumph she might have happened to win, and devote herself to the task of cheering him up. If women were wonderful in no other way, they would be wonderful for their genius for listening to shop instead of talking it.

Elizabeth was feeling more than a little proud of the way in which her judgment of this young man was being justified. Life in Bohemian New York had left her decidedly wary of strange young men, not formally introduced. But their relations, she told herself, were so splendidly unsentimental! There was no need for that silent defensiveness which had come to seem almost an inevitable accompaniment to dealings with the opposite sex. James Boyd, she felt, she could trust; and it was wonderful how soothing the reflection was.

And that was why, when the thing happened, it so shocked and frightened her.

IT had been one of their quiet evenings. Of late they had fallen into the habit of sitting for long periods together without speaking. But it had differed from other quiet evenings through the fact that Elizabeth's silence hid a slight but well-defined feeling of injury. Usually she sat happy with her thoughts, but to-night she was ruffled. She had a grievance.

That afternoon the editor of an evening paper had informed her definitely that, the man who had conducted the "Advice to the Lovelorn" column having resigned, the post of "Heloise Milton," official adviser to readers troubled with affairs of the heart, was hers. Imagine how Napoleon felt after Austerlitz, picture Colonel Goethals contemplating the last spadeful of dirt from the Panama Canal, try to visualize a suburban householder who sees a flower emerging from the soil in which he has inserted a packet of guaranteed seeds, and you will have some faint conception of how Elizabeth felt as those golden words proceeded from that editor's lips.

Into James Boyd's apartment she walked, stepping on fleecy clouds, to tell him the great news.

She told him the great news.

He said, "Ah!"

There are many ways of saying "Ah!" You can put joy, amazement, rapture into it; you can also make it sound as if it were a reply to a remark on the weather. James Boyd made it sound just like that. His hair was rumpled, his brow contracted, his manner absent. The impression he gave Elizabeth was that he barely heard her.

The next moment he was deep in a recital of the misdemeanors of the actors now rehearsing his four-act comedy. The star had done this, the leading woman that, the juvenile something else. For the first time Elizabeth listened unsympathetically.

The time came when speech failed James Boyd, and he sat back in his chair, brooding. Elizabeth, cross and wounded, sat in hers, nursing Joseph. And so, in a dim light, time flowed by.

Just how it happened, she never knew. One moment, peace; the next,



chaos. One moment, stillness; the next, Joseph hurtling through the air, all claws and expletives, and herself caught in a clasp that shook the breath from her, and kissed so emphatically that it seemed not so much a kiss as a Black Hand explosion.

One can dimly reconstruct James' train of thought. He is in despair: things are going badly at the theater, and life has lost its savor. His eye, as he sits, is caught by Elizabeth's profile. It is a pretty—above all, a soothing—profile. An almost painful sentimentality sweeps over James Boyd. There she sits, his only friend in this cruel city. If you argue that there is no necessity to spring at your only friend and nearly choke her, you argue soundly: the point is well taken. But James Boyd was be-

yond the reach of sound argument. Much rehearsing had frayed his nerves to ribbons. One may say that he was not responsible for his actions.

That is the case for James. Elizabeth, naturally, was not in a position to take a wide and understanding view of it. All she knew was that James had played her false, abused her trust in him. For a moment, such was the shock of the surprise, she was not conscious of indignation—or, indeed, of any sensation except the purely physical one of semi-strangulation. Then, flushed, and more bitterly angry than she could ever have imagined herself capable of being, she began to struggle. She tore herself away from him. Coming on top of her grievance, this thing filled her with a sudden, very vivid hatred of James. At the back of her anger, feeding it, was the humiliating thought that it was all her own fault, that by her presence there she had invited this.

She groped her way to the door. Something was writhing and struggling inside her, blinding her eyes and robbing her of speech. She was conscious only of a desire to be alone, to be back, safe and alone, in her own home. She was aware that he was speaking, but the words did not reach her. She found the door and pulled it open. She felt a hand on her arm, but she shook it off. And then she was back behind her own door—alone and at liberty to contemplate at leisure the ruins of that little temple of friendship which she had built up so carefully, and in which she had been so happy.

The broad fact that she would never forgive him was for a while her only coherent thought. To this succeeded the determination that she would never for-



The broad fact that she would never forgive him was for a while her only coherent thought.

give herself. And, having thus placed beyond the pale the only two friends she had in New York, she was free to devote herself without hindrance to the task of feeling thoroughly lonely and wretched.

The shadows deepened. Across the street a sort of bubbling explosion, followed by a jerky glare that shot athwart the room, announced the lighting of the big arc-lamp on the opposite sidewalk. She resented it, being in the mood for undiluted gloom; but she had not the energy to pull down the shade and shut it out. She sat where she was, thinking thoughts that hurt.

The door of the apartment opposite opened. There was a single ring at her bell. She did not answer it. There came another. She sat where she was, motionless. The door closed again.

THE days dragged by. Elizabeth lost count of time. Each day had its duties, which ended when you went to bed: that was all she knew—except that life had become very gray and very lonely, far lonelier even than in the time when James Boyd was nothing to her but an occasional sound of footsteps.

Of James she saw nothing. It is not difficult to avoid anyone in New York, even when you live just across the way.

IT was Elizabeth's first act each morning, immediately on awakening, to open her front door and gather in whatever lay outside it. Sometimes there would be mail, and always, unless Francis, as he sometimes did, got mixed and absent-minded, the morning milk and the morning paper.

One morning, some two weeks after that evening of which she tried not to think, Elizabeth, opening the door, found immediately outside it a folded scrap of paper. She unfolded it.

I am just off to the theater. Wont you wish me luck? I feel sure it is going to be a hit. Joseph is purring like a dynamo.

J. R. B.

In the early morning the brain works sluggishly. For an instant Elizabeth stood looking at the words uncomprehendingly; then, with a leaping of the

heart, their meaning came home to her. He must have left this note at her door on the previous night. The play had been produced! And somewhere in the folded interior of that morning paper at her feet must be the opinion of One in Authority concerning it.

Dramatic criticisms have this peculiarity: if you are looking for them, they burrow and hide like rabbits. They dodge behind murders; they duck behind baseball scores; they lie up snugly behind the Wall Street news. It was a full minute before Elizabeth found what she sought. The first words she read smote her like a blow.

In that vein of delightful facetiousness which so endears him to all followers and perpetrators of the drama, the One in Authority rent and tore James Boyd's play. He knocked James Boyd's play down and kicked it; he jumped on it with large feet; he poured cold water on it; and he chopped it into little bits. He merrily disemboweled James Boyd's play.

Elizabeth quivered from head to foot. She caught at the door-post to steady herself. In a flash all her resentment had gone, wiped away and annihilated like a mist before the sun. She loved him, and she knew now that she had always loved him.

It took her two seconds to realize that the One in Authority was a miserable incompetent, incapable of recognizing merit when it was displayed before him. It took her five minutes to dress. It took her a minute to run downstairs and out to the news-stand on the corner of the street. Here, with a lavishness that charmed and exhilarated the proprietor, she bought all the other papers that he could supply. Eagerly she sought the reviews of the play.

Moments of tragedy are best described briefly. Each of the papers noticed the play, and each of them damned it with uncompromising heartiness. The criticisms varied only in tone. One cursed with relish and gusto; another with a certain pity; a third with a kind of wounded superiority, as of one compelled against his will to speak of something unspeakable; still another wrote as if he were spanking a naughty child;



She bought all the papers. Each noticed the play, and each damned it with uncompromising heartiness.

but the meaning of all was the same: James Boyd's play was a hideous failure.

Back to the house sped Elizabeth, leaving the organs of a free people to be gathered up, smoothed and replaced on the stand by the now more than ever charmed proprietor. Up the stairs she sped and, arriving breathlessly at James' door, rang the bell.

Heavy footsteps came down the passage—crushed, disheartened footsteps, footsteps that sent a chill to Elizabeth's heart. The door opened. James Boyd stood before her, heavy-eyed and haggard. In his eyes was despair, and on his chin the blue growth of beard of the man from whom the mailed fist of Fate has smitten the energy to perform his morning shave.

Behind him, littering the floor, were the morning papers. At sight of them Elizabeth broke down.

"Oh, Jimmy darling," she cried; and the next moment she was in his arms. And for a space time stood still.

How long afterwards it was, she never knew; but eventually James Boyd spoke.

"If you'll marry me," he said hoarsely, "I don't care a hang."

"Jimmy darling," said Elizabeth, "of course I will."

Past them, as they stood there, a black streak shot silently and disappeared out of the door. Joseph was leaving the sinking ship.

"Let him go, the fraud," said Elizabeth bitterly. "I shall never believe in black cats again."

But James was not of this opinion.

"Joseph has brought me all the luck I need."

"But the play meant everything to you."

"It did then."

Elizabeth hesitated.

"Jimmy dear, it's all right, you know. I know you will make a fortune out of your next play, and I've heaps for us both to live on till you make good. We can manage splendidly on my salary from the *Evening Chronicle*."

"What! Have you got a job on a New York paper?"

"Yes. I told you about it. I am doing 'Heloise Milton.' Why, what's the matter?"

He groaned hollowly.

"And I was thinking that you would come back to Chicago with me!"

"But I will. Of course I will. What did you think I meant to do?"

"What! Give up a real job in New York!" He blinked. "This isn't really happening: I'm dreaming."

"But, Jimmy, are you sure you can get work in Chicago? Wouldn't it be better to stay on here, where all the managers are, and—"

He shook his head.

"I think it's time I told you about myself," he said. "Am I sure I can get work in Chicago? I am, worse luck. Darling, have you in your more material moments ever toyed with a Boyd's Premier Breakfast Sausage or kept body and soul together with a slice off a Boyd's Excelsior Home-Cured Ham? My father makes them, and the tragedy of my life is that he wants me to help him at it. This was my position. I loathed the family business as much as Dad loved it. I had a notion—a fool notion, as it has turned out—that I could make good in the literary line. I've scribbled in a sort of way ever since I was in college."

"When the time came for me to join the firm, I put it to Dad straight. I said, 'Give me a chance, one good, square chance, to see if the divine fire is really there, or if somebody has just turned in the alarm as a practical joke.'

"And we made a bargain. I had written this play, and we made it a test-case. We fixed it up that Dad should put up the money to give it a Broadway production. If it succeeded, all right: I'm the young Gus Thomas and may go ahead in the literary game. If it's a fizzle, off goes my coat, and I abandon pipe-dreams of literary triumphs and start in as the guy who put the *Co.* in Boyd & Co."

"Well, events have proved that I *am* the guy, and now I'm going to keep my part of the bargain just as squarely as Dad kept his. I know quite well that, if I refused to play fair and chose to stick on here in New York and try again, Dad would go on staking me. That's the sort of dad he is. But I wouldn't do it for a million Broadway successes. I've had my chance, and I've fozzled; and

now I'm going back to make him happy by being a real live member of the firm. And the queer thing about it is that last night I hated the idea, and this morning, now that I've got you, I almost look forward to it."

He gave a little shiver.

"And yet—I don't know. There's something rather grewsome still to my near-artist soul in the idea of living in luxury on murdered piggies. Have you ever seen them persuading a pig to play the stellar rôle in a Boyd Premier Breakfast Sausage? It's pretty ghastly. They string them up by their hind legs, and—brrrrr!"

"Never mind," said Elizabeth soothingly. "Perhaps they don't mind it really."

"Well, I don't know," said James Boyd doubtfully. "I've watched them at it, and I'm bound to say they didn't seem any too well pleased."

"Try not to think of it."

"Very well," said James dutifully.

THERE came a sudden shout from the floor above, and on the heels of it a shock-haired youth in pajamas burst into the apartment.

"Now what?" asked James. "By the way: Miss Herrold, my fiancée—Mr. Briggs—Paul Axworthy Briggs, sometimes known as the Boy Novelist. What's troubling you, Paul?"

Mr. Briggs was stammering with excitement.

"Jimmy, what do you think has happened! A black cat has just come into my apartment. I heard him mewing outside the door, and opened it, and he streaked in. And I started my new novel last night! Think of it, Jimmy! You *do* believe in black cats' bringing luck, don't you?"

"Luck! My lad, grapple that cat to your soul with hoops of steel. He's the greatest little luck-bringer in New York.

He was boarding with me till this morning."

"Then—by Jove, I forgot to ask—your play was a hit? I haven't seen the papers yet."

"Well, when you see them, don't read the notices. It was the worst frost Broadway has seen since Columbus' time."

"But—I don't understand."

"That's all right. You don't have to. Go back and fill that cat with fish, or he'll be leaving you. I suppose you left the door open?"

The Boy Novelist vanished with a passionate cry.

"**D**O you think Joseph *will* bring him luck?" said Elizabeth thoughtfully.

"It depends what sort of luck you mean. Joseph seems to work in devious ways. If I know Joseph's methods, Briggs' novel will be refused by every publisher in the city; and then, when he is sitting in his apartment wondering which of his razors to end himself with, there will be a ring at the bell, and in will come the most beautiful girl in the world. And then—well, then, take it from me, he will be all right."

"He wont mind about the novel?"

"It wont exist for him."

"Not even if its failure means that he will have to go away and kill pigs and things?"

James Boyd regarded her a little seriously.

"You mustn't let your mind dwell on that pig-killing business, dear. I've noticed a slight tendency in you to let yourself get rather morbid about it. I know they string them up by the hind legs, and all that sort of thing; but you must remember that a pig looks at these things from a different standpoint. My belief is that the pigs like it. Try not to think of it."

"Very well," said Elizabeth dutifully.

# The Mystery of Chance

*A new "Uncle Abner" story—there is no better short mystery story than an "Uncle Abner" story—in which the famous character arrives just in time to prevent a crime.*

By Melville Davisson Post

Author of the "Randolph Mason" and the "Uncle Abner" stories

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM OBERHARDT

**I**T was a night like the pit. The rain fell steadily. Now and then a gust of wind rattled the shutters, and the tavern sign, painted with the features of George the Third, now damaged by musket-balls and with the eyes burned out, creaked.

The tavern sat on the bank of the Ohio. Below lay the river and the long, flat island, where the ill-starred Blennerhasset had set up his feudal tenure. Flood water covered the island and spread everywhere—a vast sea of yellow that enveloped the meadow-lands and plucked at the fringe of the forest.

The scenes in the tavern were in striking contrast. The place boomed with mirth, shouts of laughter, ribald tales and songs composed in the unspeakable brothels of Memphis. The whole crew of the *Eldorado* of New Orleans banqueted in the guest-room of the tavern. This was the open room for the public. Beyond it and facing the river was the guest-room for the gentry, with its floor scrubbed with sand, its high-boy in veneered mahogany, its polished andirons and its various pretensions to a hostelry of substance.

At a table in this room, unmindful of the bedlam beyond him, a man sat reading a pamphlet. He leaned over on the table, between two tall brass candlesticks, his elbows on the board, his thumb marking the page. He had the dress and manner of a gentleman—excellent cloth in his coat, a rich stock and imported linen. On the table sat a top

hat of the time, and in the corner by the driftwood fire was a portmanteau with silver buckles, strapped up as for a journey. The man was under forty, his features regular and clean-cut; his dark brows joined above eyes big and blue and wholly out of place in the olive skin.

Now and then he got up, went over to the window and looked out, but he was unable to see anything, for the rain continued and the puffs of wind. He seemed disturbed and uneasy. He drummed on the sill with his fingers, and then, with a glance at his portmanteau, returned to his chair between the two big tallow candles.

From time to time the tavern-keeper looked in at the door with some servile inquiry. This interruption annoyed the guest.

"Damme, man," he said, "are you forever at the door?"

"Shall I give the crew rum, sir?" the landlord asked.

"No," replied the man; "I will not pay your extortions for imported liquor."

"They wish it, sir."

The man looked up from his pamphlet.

"They wish it, eh," he said with nice enunciation. "Well, Mr. Castoe, I do not!"

The soft voice dwelt on the "Mr. Castoe" with ironical emphasis. The mobile upper lip, shadowed with a silken mustache, lifted along the teeth with a curious feline menace.





Uncle Abner

THE man was hardly over his table before the door opened again. He turned abruptly, like a panther, but when he saw who stood in the door, he arose with a formal courtesy.

"You are a day early, Abner," he said. "Are the Virginia wagons in for their salt and iron?"

"They will arrive to-morrow," replied my uncle; "the roads are washed out with the rains."

The man looked at my uncle, his hat and his greatcoat splashed with mud.

"How did you come?" he asked.

"Along the river," replied my uncle.

"I thought to find you on the *Eldorado*."

"On the *Eldorado*!" cried the man.

"On such a night, when the Tavern of George the Third has a log fire and kegs in the cellar!"

My uncle entered, closed the door, took off his greatcoat and hat, and sat down by the hearth.

"The boat looked deserted," he said.

"To the last nigger," said the man.

"I could not take the comforts of the tavern and deny them to the crew."

My uncle warmed his hands over the snapping fire.

"A considerate heart, Byrd," he said, with some deliberation, "is a fine quality in a man. But how about the owners of your cargo, and the company that insures your boat?"

"The cargo, Abner," replied the man, "is in Benton's warehouse, unloaded for your wagons. The boat is tied up in the back-water. No log can strike it."

He paused and stroked his clean-cut, aristocratic jaw.

"The journey down from Fort Pitt was damnable," he added, "—miles of flood water, yellow and running with an accursed current. It was no pleasure voyage, believe me, Abner. There were the current-running logs, and when we got in near the shore, the settlers fired on us. A careless desperado, your settler, Abner!"

"More careless, Byrd, do you think," replied my uncle, "than the river captain who overturns the half-submerged cabins with the wash of his boat?"

"The river," said the man, "is the steamboat's highway."

"And the cabin," replied my uncle, "is the settler's home."

"One would think," said Byrd, "that this home was a palace and the swamp-land a garden of the Hesperides, and your settler a King of the Golden





"The fire was set," he said. Byrd got up at that.



and his clenched hand crashed on the table.

Mountains. My stacks are full of bullet-holes."

My uncle was thoughtful by the fire. "This thing will run into a river war," he said. "There will be violence and murder done."

"A war, eh!" echoed the man. "I had not thought of that, and yet, I had but now an ultimatum. When we swung in to-night, a big backwoodsman came out in a canoe and delivered an oration. I have forgotten the periods, Abner, but he would burn me at the stake, I think, and send the boat to Satan, unless I dropped down the river and came in below the settlement."

He paused and stroked his jaw again with that curious gesture.

"But for the creature's command," he added, "I would have made the detour. But when he threatened, I ran in as I liked, and the creature got a ducking for his pains. His canoe went bottom upward, and if he had not been a man of oak, he would have gone himself to Satan."

"And what damage did you do?" inquired my uncle.

"Why, no damage, as it happened," said the man. "Some cabins swayed, but no one of them went over. I looked, Abner, for a skirmish in your war. There was more than one rifle at a window. If I were going to follow the river," he continued, "I would mount a six-pounder."

"You will quit the river, then," remarked my uncle.

"It is a dog's life, Abner," said the man. "To make a gain in these days of Yankee trading, the owner must travel with his boat. Captains are a trifle too susceptible to bribe. I do not mean gold-pieces, slipped into the hand, but the hospitalities of the shop-keeper. Your Yankee, Abner, sees no difference in men, or he will waive it for a sixpence in his till. The captain is banqueted at his house, and the cargo is put on short. One cannot sit in comfort at New Orleans and trade along the Ohio."

"Is one, then, so happy in New Orleans?" asked my uncle.

"In New Orleans, no," replied the man, "but New Orleans is not the

world. The world is in Picadilly, where one can live among his fellows like a gentleman, and see something of life—a Venetian dancer, ladies of fashion, and men who dice for something more than a trader's greasy shillings."

BYRD again got up and went to the window. The rain and gusts of wind continued. His anxiety seemed visibly to increase.

My uncle arose and stood with his back to the driftwood fire, his hands spread out to the flame. He glanced at Byrd and at the pamphlet on the table, and the firm muscles of his mouth hardened into an ironical smile.

"Mr. Evelyn Byrd," he said, "what do you read?"

The man came back to the table. He sat down and crossed one elegant knee over the other.

"It is an essay by the Englishman Mill," he said, "reprinted in the press that Benjamin Franklin set up at Philadelphia. I agree with Lord Fairfax where the estimable Benjamin is concerned: 'Damn his little maxims! They smack too much of New England!' But his press gives now and then an English thing worth while."

"And why is this English essay worth while?" asked my uncle.

"Because, Abner, in its ultimate conclusions, it is a justification of a gentleman's most interesting vice. 'Chance,' Mr. Mill demonstrates, 'is not only at the end of all our knowledge, but it is also at the beginning of all our postulates.' We begin with it, Abner, and we end with it. The structure of all our philosophy is laid down on the sills of chance and roofed over with the rafters of it."

"The Providence of God, then," said my uncle, "does not come into Mr. Mill's admirable essay."

Mr. Evelyn Byrd laughed.

"It does not, Abner," he said. "Things happen in this world by chance, and this chance is no aide-de-camp of your God. It happens unconcernedly to all men. It has no rogue to ruin and no good churchman, pattering his prayers, to save. A man lays his plans according to the scope and grasp of his intelli-

gence, and this chance comes by to help him or to harm him, as it may happen, with no concern about his little morals, and with no divine intent."

"And so you leave God out," said my uncle, with no comment.

"And why not, Abner?" replied the man. "Is there any place in this scheme of nature for His intervention? Why, sir, the intelligence of man that your Scriptures so despise can easily put His little plan of rewards and punishments out of joint. Not the good, Abner, but the intelligent, possess the earth. The man who sees on all sides of his plan, and hedges it about with wise precaution, brings it to success. Every day the foresight of men outwits your God."

MY uncle lifted his chin above his wet stock. He looked at the window with the night banked behind it, and then down at the refined and elegant gentleman in the chair beside the table, and then at the strapped-up portmanteau in the corner. His great jaw moved out under the massive chin. From his face, from his manner, he seemed about to approach some business of vital import. Then, suddenly, from the room beyond there came a great boom of curses, a cry that the dice had fallen against a platter, a blow and a gust of obscenities and oaths.

My uncle extended his arm toward the room.

"Your gentleman's vice," he said; "eh, Mr. Byrd!"

The man put out a jeweled hand and snuffed the candles.

"The vice, Abner, but not the gentlemen."

Mr. Byrd flicked a bit of soot from his immaculate sleeve. Then he made a careless gesture.

"These beasts," he said, "are the scum of New Orleans. They would bring any practice into disrepute. One cannot illustrate a theory by such creatures. Gaming, Abner, is the diversion of a gentleman; it depends on chance, even as all trading does. The Bishop of London has been unable to point out wherein it is immoral."

"Then," said Abner, "the Bishop does little credit to his intelligence."

"It has been discussed in the coffee-houses of New Orleans," replied Mr. Byrd, "and no worthy objection found."

"I think I can give you one," replied my uncle.

"And what is your objection, Abner?" asked the man.

"It has this objection, if no other," replied my uncle, "it encourages a hope of reward without labor, and it is this hope, Byrd, that fills the jail-house with weak men, and sets strong ones to dangerous ventures."

He looked down at the man before him, and again his iron jaw moved.

"Byrd," he said, "under the wisdom of God, labor alone can save the world. It is everywhere before all benefits that we would enjoy. One must till the earth before one can eat of its fruits. He must fell the forest and let in the sun before his grain will ripen. He must spin and weave. And in his trading he must labor to carry his surplus stuff to foreign people, and to bring back what he needs from their abundance. Labor is the great condition of reward. And your gentleman's vice, Byrd, would annul it and overturn the world."

But the man was not listening to Abner's words. He was on his feet and again before the window. He had his jaw gathered into his hand. The man swore softly.

"What disturbs you, Byrd?" said my uncle.

He stood unmoving before the fire, his hands to the flame.

The man turned quickly.

"It is the night, Abner—wind and driving rain. The devil has it!"

"The weather, Byrd," replied my uncle, "happens in your philosophy by chance, so be content with what it brings you, for this chance regards, as you tell me, no man's plans; neither the wise man nor the fool hath any favor of it."

"Nor the just nor the unjust, Abner."

My uncle looked down at the floor. He locked his great bronze fingers behind his massive back.

"And so you believe, Byrd," he said. "Well, I take issue with you. I think this thing you call 'chance' is the Prov-

idence of God, and I think it favors the just."

"Abner," cried the man, now turning from the window, "if you believe that, you believe it without proof."

"Why, no," replied my uncle; "I have got the proof on this very night."

He paused a moment; then he went on.

"I was riding with the Virginia wagons," he said, "on the journey here. It was my plan to come on slowly with them, arriving on the morrow. But these rains fell; the road on this side of the Hills was heavy; and I determined to leave the wagons and ride in to-night."

"Now, call this what you like—this unforeseen condition of the road, this change of plan. Call it 'chance,' Byrd!"

Again he paused and his big jaw tightened.

"But it is no chance, sir, nor any accidental happening that Madison of Virginia, Simon Carroll of Maryland and my brother Rufus are upright men, honorable in their dealings and fair before the world."

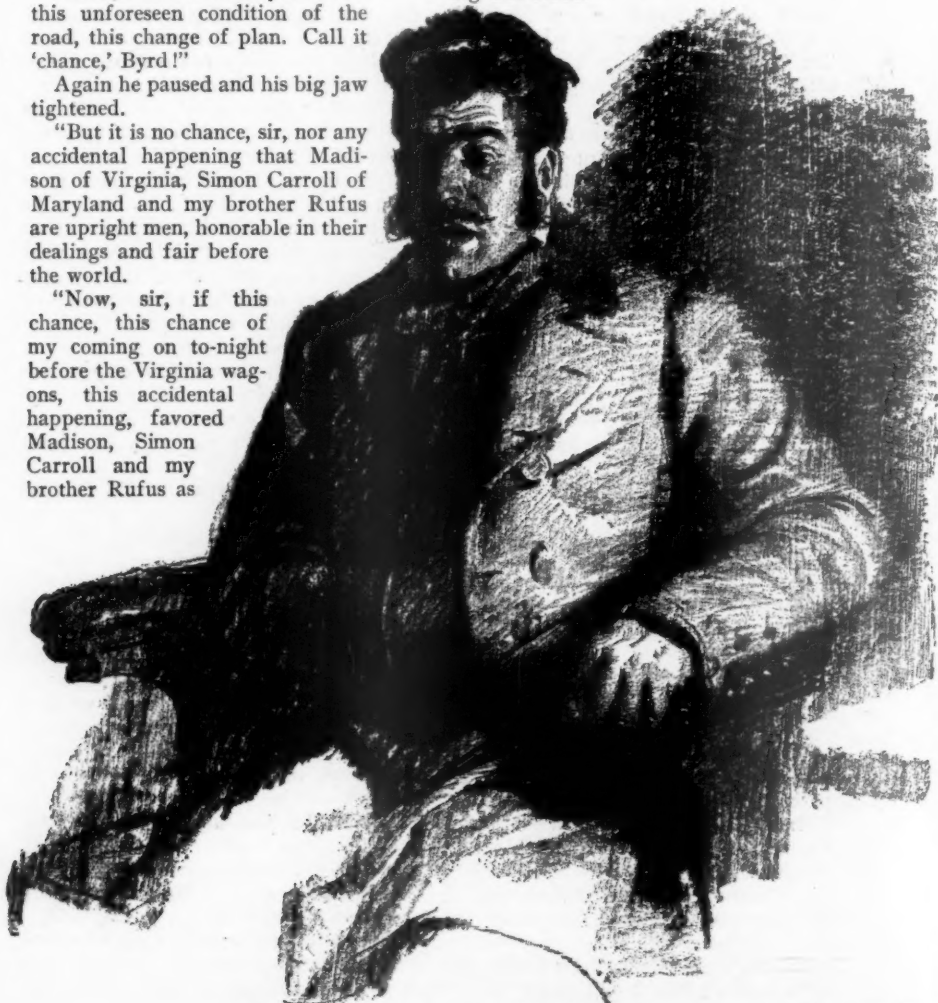
"Now, sir, if this chance, this chance of my coming on to-night before the Virginia wagons, this accidental happening, favored Madison, Simon Carroll and my brother Rufus as

though with a direct and obvious intent, as though with a clear and preconceived design, you will allow it to me as a proof, or, at least, Mr. Evlyn Byrd, as a bit of evidence, as a sort of indisputable sign, that honorable men, men who deal fairly with their fellows, have some favor of these inscrutable events."

The man was listening now with a careful attention. He came away from the window and stood beside the table, his clenched fingers resting on the board.

"What do you drive at, Abner?" he asked.

My uncle lifted his chin above the big wet stock.



Byrd's eyes—strange, incredible eyes in that olive skin—were now hard and expressionless



as glass. His lips moved, and his hand crept up toward a bulging pocket of his satin waistcoat.



"A proof of my contention, Byrd," he answered.

"But your story, Abner? What happened?"

My uncle looked down at the man.

"There is no hurry, Byrd," he said; "the night is but half advanced, and you will not now go forward on your journey."

"My journey!" echoed the man. "What do you mean?"

"Why, this," replied my uncle: "that you would be setting out for Picadilly, I imagine, and the dancing women, and the gentlemen who live by chance. But as you do not go now, we have ample leisure for our talk."

"Abner," cried Mr. Byrd, "what is this riddle?"

My uncle moved a little in his place before the fire.

"I left the Virginia wagons at mid-day," he went on; "night fell in the flat land; I could hardly get on; the mud was dry and the rains blew. The whole world was like the pit."

"It is a common belief that a horse can see on any night, however dark, but this belief is error, like that which attributes supernatural perception to the beast. My horse went into the trees and the fence; now and then there was a candle in a window, but it did not lighten the world; it served only to accentuate the darkness. It seemed impossible to go forward on a strange road, now flooded. I thought more than once to stop in at some settler's cabin. But, mark you, Byrd, I came on. Why? I cannot say. 'Chance,' Mr. Evelyn Byrd, if you like. I would call it otherwise. But no matter."

He paused a moment, and then continued:

"I came in by the river. It was all dark like the kingdom of Satan. Then, suddenly, I saw a light and your boat tied up. This light seemed somewhere inside, and its flame puzzled me. I got down from my horse and went onto the steamboat. I found no one, but I found the light. It was a fire just gathering under way. A carpenter had been at work; he had left some shavings and bits of candle, and in this line of rubbish the fire had started."

The man sat down in his chair beside the two tallow candles.

"Fire!" he said. "Yes, there was a carpenter at work in my office cabin to-day. He left shavings, and perhaps bits of candle, it is likely. Was it in my office cabin?"

"Along the floor there," replied my uncle, "beginning to flame up."

"Along the floor!" repeated Mr. Byrd. "Then nothing in my cabin was burned? The wall desk, Abner, with the long mahogany drawer—it was not burned?"

He spoke with an eager interest.

"It was not burned," replied my uncle. "Did it contain things of value?"

"Of great value," returned the man.

"You leave, then, things of value strangely unprotected," replied my uncle. "The door was open."

"But not the desk, Abner. It was securely locked. I had that lock from Sheffield. No key would turn it but my own."

Byrd sat for some moments unmoving, his delicate hand fingering his chin, his lips parted. Then, as with an effort, he got back his genial manner.

"I thank you, Abner," he said. "You have saved my boat. And it was a strange coincidence that brought you there to do it."

Then he flung back in his big chair with a laugh.

"But your theory, Abner? This chance event does not support it. It is not the good or Christian that this coincidence has benefitted. It is I, Abner, who am neither good nor Christian."

MY uncle did not reply. His face remained set and reflective.

The rain beat on the window-pane, and the drunken feast went on in the room beyond him.

"Byrd," he said, "how do you think that fire was set? A half-burned cigar dropped by a careless hand, or an enemy?"

"An enemy, Abner," replied the man. "It will be the work of these damned settlers. Did not their envoy threaten if I should come in to the peril of their cabins? I gave them no concern then, but I was wrong in that. I should have looked out for their venom. Still, they



threaten with such ease and with no hand behind it that one comes, in time, to take no notice of their words."

He paused and looked up at the big man above him.

"What do you think, Abner? Was the fire set?"

"One cannot tell from the burning rubbish," replied my uncle.

"But your opinion, Abner?" said the man. "What is your opinion?"

"The fire was set," replied my uncle.

Byrd got up at that, and his clenched hand crashed on the table.

"Then, by the kingdom of Satan, I will overturn every settler's cabin when the boat goes out to-morrow."

My uncle gave no attention to the man's violence.

"You would do wanton injury to innocent men," he said. "The settlers did not fire your boat."

"How can you know that, Abner?"

My uncle changed. Vigor and energy and an iron will got into his body and his face.

"Byrd," he said, "we had an argument just now; let me recall it to your attention. You said 'chance' happened equally to all, and I that the Providence of God directs it. If I had failed to come on to-night, the boat would have burned. The settlers would have taken blame for it. And Madison of Virginia, Simon Carroll of Maryland and my brother Rufus, whose company at Baltimore insure your boat, would have met a loss they can ill afford."

His voice was hard and level like a sheet of light.

"Not you, Byrd, who, as you tell me, are neither good nor Christian, but these men, who are, would have settled for this loss. Is it the truth—eh, Mr. Evlyn Byrd?"

The man's big blue eyes widened in his olive skin.

"I should have claimed the insurance, of course, as I had the right to do," he said coldly, for he was not in fear. "But, Abner—"

"Precisely!" replied my uncle. "And now, Mr. Evlyn Byrd, let us go on. We had a further argument. You thought a

man in his intelligence could outwit God. And, sir, you undertook to do it! With your crew drunken here, the boat deserted, the settlers to bear suspicion and your portmanteau packed up for your journey overland to Baltimore, you watched at that window to see the flames burst out."

The man's blue eyes—strange, incredible eyes in that olive skin—were now hard and expressionless as glass. His lips moved, and his hand crept up toward a bulging pocket of his satin waistcoat.

Grim, hard as iron, inevitable, my uncle went on:

"But you failed, Byrd! God outwitted you! When I put that fire out in the rubbish, the cabin was dark, and in the dark, Byrd, there, I saw a gleam of light shining through the keyhole of your wall desk—the desk that you alone can open, that you keep so securely locked. Three bits of candle were burning in that empty drawer."

The man's white hand approached the bulging pocket.

And my uncle's voice rang as over a plate of steel.

"Outwit God!" he cried. "Why, Byrd, you had forgotten a thing that any schoolboy could have told you. You had forgotten that a bit of candle in a drawer, for lack of air, burns more slowly than a bit outside. Your pieces set to fire the rubbish were consumed, but your pieces set in that locked drawer to make sure—to outwit God, if, by chance, the others failed—were burning when I burst the lid off."

The man's nimble hand, lithe like a snake, whipped a derringer out of his bulging pocket.

But, quicker than that motion, quicker than light, quicker than the eye, my uncle was upon him. The derringer fell harmless to the floor. The bones of the man's slender fingers snapped in an iron palm. And my uncle's voice, big, echoing like a trumpet, rang above the storm and the drunken shouting:

"Outwit God! Why, Mr. Evlyn Byrd, you cannot outwit me, who am the feeblest of His creatures!"

*Another of these fine stories of "Uncle Abner" will be in an early issue of The Red Book Magazine.*

# The Fifth Choice of Mr. Pollerson

*THE women just did not seem able to resist the fellow, even though he selected a fifth wife on the way home from the funeral of his fourth.*

By Ida M. Evans

Author of "Virginia," "Mudpuddles," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

**I**N the Misses Ray and Buskey's Millinery Emporium, which stood at the northeast corner of Oldetown's public square (and had stood there so long that the present High School classes and most of the High School's alumni had its trim green-lace-papered shelves to thank for first fine-tucked, lace-frilled, sheer-lawn bonnets), business never came to a full period of cessation between seasons. But a languid time of trade, a pause that was not wholly a pause,—like a semicolon,—marked the ebbing of the old season, just before the opening flutter of the new.

And so, though September tenth was certainly a date to ring the knell of spring hat-buying, and though several pine boxes of new winter hats stood in the rear of the store, ready to be unpacked and tagged, Miss Hortensia Ray, the gray-haired senior partner, stood hesitant after gathering an armful of summer unsalables from pedestal and wall-case.

"Jane Hennessy tried on this lilac pyroxylin turban at the Easter opening," she said, "and twice again at the end of May. And when it stood in the window during the July mark-down, I saw her stop four times to look at it. She always buys so plagued late, so as to get it cheap and have it fresh for next year." Miss Hortensia spoke with irritation; but it was a placid sort of irritation. "Maybe we'd better not pack it away for a while?" This she said doubtfully.

"Maybe we'd better not," placidly agreed Miss Ellena Buskey, the gray-haired junior partner, from the sateen-cushioned rocker where she was wrapping left-over muslin flowers in tissue paper to prevent their fading during winter retirement.

A placid, pleasant, agreeing little woman was Miss Ellena. Her soft wad of gray hair was daintily crimped like fluted gray tissue paper. Her soft hands were a bit yellow, like white tissue paper that has been laid away a long time. And her cheeks were faintly wrinkled, like faded pink tissue paper that has been crumpled and then partly smoothed. She hummed as she sorted the flowers, pausing presently when the postman tossed the Oldetown Weekly *Gazette* through the open front door.

"Any news?" queried Miss Hortensia.

Miss Ellena read with horror: "Lawyer Hale's son has run away with that pretty new waitress at the City Hotel."

"I expected it," calmly commented Hortensia as she got a hammer to open a packing-case of new hats.

"And Mrs. Carrol's mother has gone to her married daughter in Burlington—"

"Poor old soul! They pass her around like a worn-out shawl."

"And the Elite Hat Store has hired a trimmer from New York City."

"I don't believe it,"—calmly. "Anyway, I guess Chicago is capable of dealing style to Oldetown. Mike Houston

wrote that he is sending us a trimmer that is a trimmer. I wrote him we didn't want just a pair of cheap silk ankles, two cerise cheeks and an aigret, all drenched over with Trefle Incarnat. I wrote him,"—warmly,—“what we thought of him and his firm for unloading that weeping piece of stylishness on us last spring.”

“She tried to please us, Hortensia,”—gently.

“Tried! She cried! I wrote Mike that we can stand a girl who paints herself up like a sunset, because for some reason only the real vain girls have a real artistic knack with ribbon. And I can worry along with one that is lazy. But I wrote that we will not

poned because—’ Why, dear me! ‘As the *Gazette* goes to press, we receive the sad tidings of the death of Mrs. Isaiah Pollerson.’”

Decorously Miss Hortensia echoed, “Dear me!”

“Poor Lucabel!” Miss Ellena's voice took on the plaintive sadness that death demands as its due. Her gentle gray eyes melted behind the tear-mist that death begs as its *douceur*.

Miss Hortensia (whose gray hair was wiry and arranged in a stylish but stern, three-tiered cylinder not at all suggestive of softness) uttered the one conventional exclamation of decorum. But she grew neither misty-eyed nor sad-voiced. She said, in a matter-of-fact tone: “Well, if I'm any judge, Lucabel is a sight happier to-day than any day of the ten years that she's lived with Isaiah Pollerson. His other three wives before her crawled thankfully into their coffins. Cheap coffins, too. I heard he paid only thirty-one



“I don't know what there is about that man, but he can make a woman like him even while she's hating him.”

be afflicted,”—determinedly,—“with a girl that, if you look sideways at her, flops onto a chair and snivels.” And then suddenly, irascible warmth of tone veered to pleasurable warmth of tone: “Ellena! *Aren't* these plaid plush sailors elegant?”—rapturously lifting an assorted dozen of misses' headgear from the pine case.

“Lovely,” agreed Miss Ellena, and read: “The sociable has been post-

dollars for the one for poor Nancy.”

Miss Ellena's gentle lips pursed slightly in disapproval. Hortensia meant well, she knew, but such outspokenness verged on indelicacy.

“I remember Lucabel bought her wedding hat here,” she said in plaintive reminiscence. “It had a side pompon of pale pink spirea.”

“I remember, too,”—grimly. “And six days after the wedding, she brought

it back. Isaiah came with her. He had the pink flowers changed to a dark green silk bow that would wear better."

"I guess he is a terrible mean man," admitted Ellena.

"He's as mean as a weasel with the rabies," cheerfully declared Miss Hortensia as she loudly hammered open another new case.

A loud, indignant voice overclamored the hammer-blows. A wide, indignant woman stood in the front door.

"Are you packing summer hats away, Hortensia Ray?"

"I'm unpacking new goods to be ready for the new trimmer that'll be here this week." And Hortensia looked pointedly at a hand-painted taffeta calendar hanging by the ribbon-case.

"But we saved out a lilac turban that we always said would be becoming to you, Jane," tactfully put in Ellena.

Mrs. Hennessy took the turban and rotated it on a covetous yet reluctant forefinger. "Lilac fades easy," she disparaged.

"That hat has stood in the window 'most all summer," Hortensia said in quick rebuttal.

Judicially and instantly Mrs. Hennessy squashed the rebuttal. "Yes, I noticed. I'm afraid it's faded now. I wouldn't want to pay,"—peering at the dangling price-tag,—"three dollars and fifty cents for a faded hat."

"It was trimmed to sell for twelve dollars, Easter," said Hortensia with some severity. And just then hammering her thumb, she was goaded into adding, "We can't afford to give hats away."

Mrs. Hennessy held the turban at critical arm's length; then she remarked, "I saw in last week's *Gazette* that you and Ellena are buying forty acres north of town."

Hortensia Ray was no apologetic capitalist. "It would be mighty funny if we had nothing to show for all our years of work and worry."

Defiance is ever capital's best weapon. Mrs. Hennessy succumbed at once. "Oh, I aint grudging you anything,"—hastily. "You two have earned all you've got. But,"—she balanced the hat undecidedly,— "it's so late in the season I wouldn't get much wear out of it."

"We'll make it three dollars," coaxed Ellena.

"I wasn't planning to pay but two-fifty,"—meditatively.

Hortensia hammered violently. Ellena pursed her lips.

An unfriendliness of atmosphere was felt by Mrs. Hennessy. She deemed it wise to introduce another topic. "So Lucabel Pollerson is dead! I wonder who'll be that man's fifth."

Ellena's gentle lips involuntarily unpursed. "Fifth?"

Hortensia rested the hammer. "The idea!"

"After the mean way he has treated four!" gently derided Ellena.

"He treated three mean, and he got a fourth. And he'll get a fifth just as easy. I don't know what there is about that man," reflected Mrs. Hennessy, "but he can make a woman like him, even while she's hating him. He is mean—"

"Mean to the bone," said Hortensia.

"Mean to the marrow of his bones," vowed Mrs. Hennessy. "He's cruel: he beats his milch cows. He's stingy: he thinks twelve-cent stockings are too good for a wife. He's ugly: that long black mustache always wet-streaked with tobacco-juice—"

"Everyone knows all that," Hortensia remarked indifferently. "I guess we'll let you have the hat for two-fifty."

"Everyone knows all that; but you mark my words: Before this week's out (You mind the peonies on Lena's grave hadn't withered before he asked Nancy Hoyt to mend his mittens? You mind he stopped in at Lucabel's on the way home from Nancy's funeral to ask advice about the proper-sized headstone for Nancy?)—before this week is out,"—impressively,— "Isaiah Pollerson will have made his fifth choice. And whoever she is, she'll be as tickled—"

The Misses Ray and Buskey were not impressed.

"Shucks," said Hortensia. "Shall I put the hat in a box or sack, Jane?"

"Mark my words,"—sagely. "And whoever she is, she'll have a bit of property, too. He has never picked one that hadn't some."

Ellena mildly shook her soft gray head. "Nonsense. Everyone knows

what kind of a man he is. I don't ever remember speaking to him, but his hard, black eyes make me think of a mad horse that I saw once. Don't forget to put white hatpins in, Hortensia."

"Mark my words,"—for the third impressive time. "Before the week's—" She sent dubitative glance after the turban as the box enveloped it. "I believe, though, I'll wait another week before deciding on that hat. There's a brown chip at the Elite—" She departed.

Hortensia put the hat back on a pedestal. "If I had a daughter,"—exasperatedly,—"I'd not advise her to go into the millinery business."

"It's not a speck faded!" said Ellena, "*—not a—*" She stopped short; then gasped in a whisper, "*Hortensia!*"

Hortensia did not lose self-possession so easily. Composedly she advanced toward the tall, black-eyed man who, with diffidence real or assumed, was standing in the front door. He was an oldish man, much older, you instinctively guessed, than a large, sinewy build admitted. A long, black mustache, yellow-streaked with tobacco, hid his lips.

Sweeping off his broad hat with hasty politeness, he came on into the shop.

"I—I s'pose,"—falteringly,—"you've heard Lucabel has—has left me?"

Though you are an outspoken lady, and though you heartily detest a man, you cannot be callous while he stands beside Death, that great mincer of words and dislikes. Hortensia murmured condolence.

"Poor Lucabel," said Ellena, misty-eyed.

Lucabel's husband extended an arm. "I thought a band of crape,"—hesitatingly,—"*would be a—a tasty tribute.*"

Miss Hortensia said that it would indeed be a mark of respect. Ellena observed gently that she liked to see such a band. It signified the dead were not forgotten.

"I'll never forget Lucabel," he began soberly. "I can't forget I let her—her chop wood the day she took sick. It was a hot day." He gulped grievously. "Two weeks ago Friday—maybe you remember—"

"It was ninety-six in the shade that day," Hortensia said severely, as she

snipped off five inches of the best crape in the stock.

Ellena knew that severe tone. Now she was alarmed. There was always the danger that Hortensia might spurt from plain speaking to rude speaking.

"There is always something of negligence that one can remember," she put in tactfully.

"And some folks can remember lots more than others!" opined Hortensia as she slashed off crape and drew it taut about his arm, exactly, so Ellena gently reproved later, as though it were a string around a bundle. Ellena did not like the man. His record was as unsavory as a pan of burned soup. But she had more respect for the proprieties than had Hortensia. To forestall more opining from her partner, she asked when the services would be held.

Sadly he told her. She was unprepared to have him extend his arm to her, when the crape was sewed on by Hortensia, and say, "I b'lieve that puckers a mite,"—hesitatingly. "It'd seem sort of disrespectful to Lucabel if it—it wasn't perfectly smooth. Don't you think it would?"

With a fleck of embarrassed red in each faintly wrinkled cheek, Ellena got a needle and smoothed the pucker away. Isaiah looked down at her fingers.

"What small, nice fingers you've got," he said, as though in involuntary admiration. "Lucabel, poor girl," with a gulp, "had big, bony hands."

Ellena was startled. So was Hortensia.

"Well, I guess Lucabel, poor girl, had," cried the latter, when he had sadly gone out. "Why wouldn't she—chopping her own wood, and cooking for half a dozen hired men? Ellena, that was impudent, him speaking so to you!"

"Maybe, now she's dead, he feels sorry." With cheeks still red, Ellena looked oddly at her soft, faintly wrinkled hands. She had always been the least bit vain of them.

"Sorry!" scoffed Hortensia. And then scoffing gave way to rapturous exclamation. She lifted a tawny heap of Tams from a case. "Ellena, *aren't* these elegant? This must be that tango color Mike wrote about!"



IF you are a busy, cheerful spinster of sixty-odd, with a busy, respectable life behind you, with a partner who for four decades has been as congenial to yourself as sweet sauce to a meringue, with a tolerably successful business in your and your partner's capable grasp, you are justified, nearly, in assuming that your remaining years will be tolerably serene.

Miss Hortensia Ray, though perhaps unconsciously, so assumed.

Afterward she was dreadfully amazed to remember how much fretting she expended over the trivial vexations of the season's opening. Such trivial vexations!

What did lost goods matter? or freight delays? or wrong velvets? or a trimmer who grated on your nerves?—when, at the close of each vexatious day, she and Ellena were able to lay their gray heads side by side, in perfect amity, on the pillows of the big walnut bed which stood in the alcove trigly curtained off from the shop?

The new trimmer, Miss Stella Sowill, arrived—a stylish brunette young woman whose wending from Oldetown's depot to Mrs. Coach's boarding-house, thence to the Emporium, through to the trimming-room and to every nook and cranny thereof, was pungently marked by the too-sweet odor of Triple Strong Extract of Appleblossom. Her cheeks were pink—as pink as could be bought. Her ankles were silken, but not cheap—far from it. Three dollars a pair at the very least, Miss Hortensia disapprovingly appraised them. Miss Hortensia was of the old order, and not quite sure that silk hose and morality could invest the same person.

It seemed that Miss Sowill had a prejudice or two of her own. And she

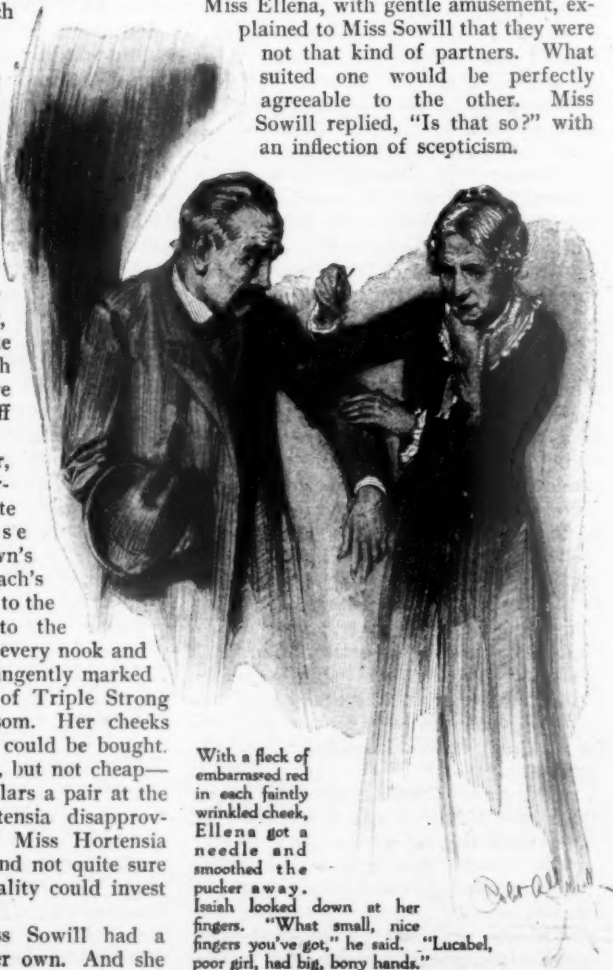
was a voluble young person. She immediately voiced one.

"I didn't know I was to work for partners!" Tone and mien implied that had she known, she might not have come to work for them.

"Indeed," said Miss Hortensia, a bit stiffly.

"Partners always squabble," said Miss Sowill. "If you suit one, you don't suit the other; and if you suit the other, you can't suit the one."

"Indeed," said Miss Hortensia, quite stiffly, and hurried out to the depot, to trail a wandering bolt of black faille. Miss Ellena, with gentle amusement, explained to Miss Sowill that they were not that kind of partners. What suited one would be perfectly agreeable to the other. Miss Sowill replied, "Is that so?" with an inflection of scepticism.



With a flock of embarrassed red in each faintly wrinkled cheek, Ellena got a needle and smoothed the pucker away. Isaiah looked down at her fingers. "What small, nice fingers you've got," he said. "Lucabel, poor girl, had big, bony hands."



When Hortensia returned from the freight depot, Ellena was putting away the best bolt of mauve satin ribbon. She explained that Isaiah Pollerson had just bought some loops for a wreath of asters for Lucabel.

Hortensia was disgusted. "Just like his hypocrisy! I'm glad I wasn't here, 'cause I can hardly keep from telling him what I think of him. Ellena!"—indignantly,—“do you know, the freight agent says he don't believe that faille was ever shipped in the first place!”

"Dear me!"—in concern. And Hortensia, sputtering, never noticed that Ellena's soft old cheeks were red-flecked.

But the next day Hortensia came back from another sputtering trip to the depot and found Miss Sowill alone in the store.

"Where is Miss Buskey?" she asked in surprise.

"At the graveyard,"—disinterestedly. "Some unlovely old rube came in and insisted that she was the only lady in this isle of nowhere who could properly strew dahlias over his wife's grave. He had two scrumptious horses that Pharaoh would have died for,"—in mild ecstasy,—“and a lop-sided top buggy that wasn't in the ark because Noah was particular.”

"Not—not Isaiah Pollerson?" heavily asked Hortensia.

Miss Sowill indifferently guessed that sounded like the name. Her senior employer became very thoughtful. Surely not—

But Ellena set her mind at ease when she returned an hour later.

"I don't like that man,"—with an energy at variance with her usual gentleness of speech. "But he was so insistent I couldn't refuse."

"He better have treated her decent while she was alive," said Hortensia severely. "Sacrilegious, I call it."

Twice again that month she had occasion to sniff "Sacrilegious!" And finally she said sternly, "Ellena, if I thought for a second that man was thinking—but it's too ridiculous!"

"Of course," said Ellena hastily.

And Hortensia's mind was quite comfortable till Jane Hennessy, her wide face aglitter with horrified satisfaction, whispered one afternoon, while Ellena was back in the trimming-room: "Hor-

tensia, you *aint* going to let Ellena marry that man? But—wasn't I right?"

Hortensia was startled into dropping a strip of white plush to the dusty floor.

"Certainly not," she snapped. "Ellena never thought of such a thing. The man pesters her to fix flowers for Lucabel's grave. I guess he feels remorseful. And Ellena and Lucabel went to school together, you know."

"Ye-es, I know," drawled Mrs. Hennessy. It was a scoffing drawl.

Hortensia's eyes went to the lilac turban on Mrs. Hennessy's head, a turban that Ellena, not Hortensia, had weakly yielded for two dollars. "Ellena is a terribly yielding person."

Grimly silent, Hortensia waited, with intuition that there was more to come. And it came. Said Mrs. Hennessy, leisurely: "Last Monday afternoon they didn't fix Lucabel's grave. They just drove. Some one passing heard Isaiah tell Ellena she worked too hard. And that some one slacked his horses long enough to hear Ellena reply, complaining-like, that she hardly ever got away from the store."

Hortensia held her breath one heavy moment. Then: "I don't believe you."

"Well! You don't have to." Mrs. Hennessy departed in huff, flinging back over a wide shoulder, "Wait!"

Out to the trimming-room went Hortensia, and was amazed, beyond all measure, to get from Ellena a petulant, "Dear me, Hortensia, am I a child to be questioned this way?" And with dignity and red, wrinkled cheeks, Ellena bore a batch of just-finished hats to the front of the store.

Hortensia stared after the gentle, dignified form.

"Once I worked for two Polish lady partners out on Lincoln Avenue," cheerfully reminisced Miss Sowill, "and they got to squabblin' over a man."

"Please quit talking and work," snapped her employer. Partners, indeed! Why, she and Ellena were not partners. They were friends, sisters, almost one.

For forty-two years—or was it forty-three since Ellena, a scrawny, eager-eyed girl of fifteen or so, sidled into the small rear room where Hortensia, a scrawny, hopeful-eyed girl of twenty or so, was

trying to coax a few dollars into a full-sized business, and asked for work? Hortensia had not enough work for herself, let alone a helper. But Ellena stayed, and shared what there was, also the hopes, fears and woes of that weak-kneed business, without question of wages, or of mine and thine, till it was no longer weak-kneed but very well-propped indeed. Partners! What did a city fibbertigibbet know of a friendship that vaulted mere partnership, as the blue sky vaults the earth!

And Jane Hennessy's tongue always was hung in the middle and loose at both ends. Anyway, it was perfectly natural that Ellena should be petulant at such brusque questioning right before Miss Sowill. And so Ellena herself gently, if a bit coldly, soon explained, and mutually constrained apologies followed.

Nevertheless, Hortensia took pains that very evening to remind Ellena that their birthdays, which happened to be only a few days apart, would soon arrive.

"I don't feel sixty-three,"—with eyes carefully turned toward Miss Sowill, who was working overtime,—"but I guess I look it. And you—you are fifty-eight, Ellena,"—carelessly—too carelessly.

"What if I am?" Ellena tossed her head. It was a dainty head. In spite of the gray hair, Hortensia thought of a pretty colt tossing a rebellious mane.

Ellena added deliberately, "I don't know as fifty-eight is so old."

Panic plowed a sickening furrow in Hortensia's soul. Could it be—?

"You bet it aint," Miss Sowill cut in boisterously. "It's a grand age, and here's a hat to fit it." She bounced over with a small rakish mauve-and-myrtle panne model just completed. Under it Ellena's hair was filmy silver, and her cheeks cherry-red.

Hortensia's eyes yielded the glistening admiration that a work of art calls for. "Beautiful! It must be in the window to-morrow." And then panic again sickeningly plowed her soul. For Ellena, to whom hats were an old and stale story, took it off with a lingering that was akin to reluctance, and looked in the mirror—not at the hat—at herself.

And the following Sunday Ellena defiantly wore that hat to church. Now, not in twenty years had either of the partners worn a hat except for such conventional reasons as protection from the elements or for advertising purposes. The defiant air with which this hat was put on whipped Hortensia's soul-sickness into sharp speech.

"Jane Hennessy tried that hat on,"—acidly,—"but I told her it was too young and rakish for her."

Ellena reddened, but was stiffly silent. And in stiff silence they walked to church, side by side, one gray head held up high and cold, one gray head held up high and defiant. And stiff side by stiff side, they sat through the sermon, not listening; at least Hortensia did not listen, being too busy looking at and looking away from the hateful, sleek-brushed back of Isaiah Pollerson's head, four pews in front. And while the last hymn rolled out, "Hypocrite!" she muttered fiercely.

"*Hortensia!*" expostulated Ellena in frantic shocked whisper.

"—grievous in the sight of the Lord!" sang Hortensia so violently that several heads turned her way. And on the stiff way home, she could not refrain from a bitter, "It isn't hardly decent to let a man squeeze your hand while the whole town gapes!"

Ellena's lips quivered; but she replied, gently, though coldly, "I'm sure there is no harm in shaking hands with a friend."

AFTER that, a certain stiffness was never absent from each. It lessened at times, as when a flurry of excellent sales and the resultant mutual congratulation melted it slightly. But it was never quite dissipated.

Isaiah Pollerson took to dropping into the store. He smiled with ostentatious tenderness at Ellena, who was embarrassed, and he smiled with blatant triumph at Hortensia, who had to bite her lips to hold back invective.

"What are you and Ellena going to do with the store?" inquisitively asked Mrs. Hennessy as she tried on, for the fourth time, a rose-and-brown stovepipe, and meditated: "Next year I could have it



Ellena added deliberately: "I don't know as fifty-eight is so old." "You bet it aint," Miss Sowill cut in boisterously. "It's a grand age, and here's a hat to fit it." She bounced over with a small rakish mauve-and-myrtle panne model just completed. Under it, Ellena's hair was filmy silver, and her cheeks cherry-red.

made over; there's so much velvet in those folds. But brown wings are awful dark-looking."

"We'll change 'em to lighter."

"Light ones show dust," objected Mrs. Hennessy. "What did you say you'd decided about the store?"

"Nothing," snapped Hortensia. "When we do, you'll see it in the *Gazette*."

But not many days later, at the close of a strenuous afternoon, Ellena told Hortensia, in a quiet, depressed voice, that she was going to marry Isaiah Pol-  
lerson.

"Ellena Buskey, you aint—you can't—you sha'n't—you don't know what you're doing—I wont let you—I wont!" Hortensia fairly shrieked the angry words. Into her eyes whipped a flame of rage, flame that was fanned high by terror.

"I think I have a right to live—my own life," said Ellena. Her voice quivered. But the soft, faintly yellow hand resting on an adjacent showcase was clenched.

Hortensia looked at it—then at Ellena's set face. Another flame of red whipped into her cheeks. But the flame in her eyes died.

Ellena hurriedly went out to the trimming-room where Miss Sowill was putting away the day's finished work. Hortensia sat stiffly down on the nearest chair—luckily it was so near that she did not have to stumble far—and folded her hands flat in her lap. Her own life! That was what Ellena had said.

"A right!"—after these forty years that their two lives had been the same as one, after forty years of buying, selling, sleeping, eating, hoping, fearing, joying together!

One season they had skimped and pared and scraped till Ellena proudly wore the sealskin sacque for which her soul had ached. They repeated the process another season, and the money went for a diamond-and-pearl brooch that Hortensia tried not to wear too ostentatiously. She remembered when old Mr. Hayes, a portly, pious widower, came wooing them, not certain which he preferred, amiably willing, it seemed, to take either. Together they had laughed

him away—as well as several others not so old or so portly.

She remembered nursing Ellena through typhoid, keeping the store open the while. And Ellena had nursed her through pneumonia—and in busy season, too. And there had been headaches innumerable, toothaches, malaria, bronchitis; and now—"her own life!"

"Well, drat her! let her go and live it, and be miserable!" And then Hortensia Ray, who had not cried since a felon twenty years before fairly pried the tears from her resolute eyes, reached blindly for a strip of goods on the counter beside her.

And early the next morning, she sold the mauve-and-myrtle hat. She sold it early because she slashed the price so recklessly that a blonde lady in greasy green charmeuse, member of a burlesque company touring the State, forever after bragged of the wonderful bargains she got in small towns, "because they have no high rents to pay, I suppose, m'dear."

Miss Sowill saw the sale indignantly. She was fonder of the gentle junior partner than of the plain-speaking elder. "Once I worked for two wops on Milwaukee Avenue," she commented unpleasantly, "and the wife of one was a spiteful creature, always selling a hat the wife of the other liked to wear." And forthwith Miss Sowill made a mauve-and-myrtle duplicate.

But Ellena did not wear it. She pushed it away with a trembling, faintly yellow hand, and her gentle old lips quivered.

"HE says he wouldn't dream of taking Ellena away from the store, because she's so used to working here that likely she wouldn't be happy just doing house-work," reported Mrs. Hennessy. "You might as well let me have that hat cheaper, 'cause the extra dollars will just go to swell his pockets in the long run."

"If he thinks I'll slave here season after season just to enrich him, he's mightily mistaken!" stormed Hortensia.

"You might make him and her buy you out," suggested Mrs. Hennessy.

At that, Hortensia turned misery-filled eyes upon her. And what would

she, Hortensia, do after she sold out to them? Pray where would she go? What savor would be left in life? The fibers of her being were bound in this store, bound with Ellena. It was cruel surgery even to suggest cutting them away.

BUGGY rides gave way to sleighing.

Miss Sowill confided genially to waiting customers that she used to work for two Norwegian ladies out in Nebraska who half the time went around their store that same way, not speaking to each other, not looking at each other, but using her as a medium for anything they wished to tell each other.

Hortensia knew that all Oldetown was

interestedly observing her woe.

She took a little satisfaction in observing that Ellena was not



"Get out!" she said.

altogether happy, either.

Sometimes her face was as miserably set as Hortensia's, and the faint wrinkles seemed to be deepening.

When the county recorder sent back the deed for the forty acres bought that summer, with a notation that an error made retyping necessary, Hortensia seized the excuse for conversation, and told Ellena that all Isaiah wanted was her dab of property. At the time, Isaiah's sleighbells were jingling



down the street. And for answer, Ellena, with curiously stiff countenance, put on her sealskin sacque.

"You know he's had four, and—"

"And I intend to be the fifth!"

"Then *be* it!" Hortensia glared fiercely. And then—then Hortensia grew sick to the very depths of her troubled old soul. For Ellena—mild, sweet-faced Ellena—glared fiercely back at her!

The sleighbells jingled impatiently, and Ellena marched out. Hortensia dropped in a rocker and cried, heavily, helplessly, hopelessly.

When the sleighbells jingled back shortly after ten, Hortensia was in bed, her face turned to the wall, pretending to be asleep, as she had pretended now for many nights.

Ellena undressed softly as usual, got some mutton tallow to dab on her hands as usual—but she did not get softly into bed as usual, and turn her face away from the back of Hortensia's wall-turned head. Ellena sat down on the floor, and began to cry—heavily, helplessly, hopelessly.

Hortensia sat up. "What's the matter? Are you sick, Ellena?"

"No, I'm not s-s-sick," Ellena quavered. "Yes, I am, too. I got rheumatism dreadful in one shoulder. I'm too o-o-old to go sleigh-riding on a c-c-cold night."

"Well, good gracious, you don't have to go," cried Hortensia, scrambling from under the covers. She got a bottle of liniment.

"And I d-don't want to m-m-marry that man."

Hortensia's heart bounded like a paper bag, wind-inflated, wind-soared. Ah, she knew all along that Ellena couldn't do it!

"You don't have to,"—briskly. "Which shoulder?"

"But I do!" wailed Ellena. In her gray-striped flannelette nightgown, her gray hair, rather skimpy when it was down, hanging disconsolately about her tear-streaked face, she was a pathetic figure.

"Shucks!" said Hortensia with all her old cheerful briskness. "Don't be a fool, Ellena. A man can't make a woman of your age marry him."

"Yes, he can. Or—or—or sue me for breach of promise."

Hortensia stood still, the bottle of liniment extended at arm's length.

"Ellena! He wouldn't dare! Did you promise him?"

Ellena cried brokenly, "Once I wrote him a note, 'Yes, I will.' But I meant I would fix a wreath for Lucabel the next day."

"He can't hold you to anything like that!"

"He says he will," sobbed Ellena.

"Shucks!" And, heartache a thing of the past, Hortensia cheerfully rubbed the shoulder till it tingled, tucked Ellena in bed, turned down the lamp and got in beside her. Being only human, however, she could not refrain from putting a very natural query before she went to sleep:

"Why, Ellena, didn't you send the man scoting in the first place?"

Ellena sobbed repentantly, "I wanted to find out if—if he was as mean as folks said."

"Well, you've found out,"—dryly.

"I know it,"—so meekly that Hortensia could not but forbear from further reproach.

SINCE there was no longer any need of keeping up a defiant front before Hortensia, Ellena went about as dejectedly as one small gray-haired woman could go and not sink down utterly into a heap of dejection.

"And it's a darn shame," the indignant Miss Sowill said loud and often, with side-glance of wrath at the senior partner. "But aint that always the way when there's partners? One browbeats, and the other is browbeaten."

Hortensia heard, more than once, but she cared not a whit whether a trimmer whose season would soon be finished understood the case or not. In spite of many valiant "Shucks!" she was worried. Isaiah Pollerson hung around, smiling meanly. And a lawyer told her that the man had the letter, if not the spirit, of the law on his side.

She wished thoughtfully that she could make away with him—and not be found out, of course. She even tried to offer herself as a substitute for the



weaker, less assertive Ellena. Though it came hard, she subdued her eyes and mouth, and forced her face into a semblance of good will, and smiled at Isaiah Pollerson with all the coquetry that she could muster.

It was not much. To be a successful coquette, one must be either greatly gifted by nature or long rehearsed by the manager of a musical comedy. In her heart, Hortensia knew that she was making herself ridiculous. But such latent self-knowledge did not soothe her when she heard—via Mrs. Hennessy, via Mr. Hennessy, via Mr. Hennessy's delivery-boy, whose sister was married to one of Isaiah's hired men—that the old Ray lady needn't be making sheep's eyes at him: he wouldn't have her if she and him was the last inhabitants!

"I don't see, Ellena," Hortensia said, with natural aridity, "how you ever could abide that man for a second!"

"He—he—sometimes—has a way with him," pleadingly apologized Ellena.

Hortensia sniffed. And Ellena, catching alarm from Hortensia's fretted mien, began to sob, just as Miss Sowill came back into the store from lunch.

"Perfectly terrible, I think—when one partner is so domineering that the other wishes she was dead. A girl does certainly meet a lot of queer people when she's working. Once I was employed by a domineering Scotch-Irish woman, who kept the store all in her own name, just because her partner was a gentle person and didn't insist on papers being made out—"

"What's that you're saying?" Hortensia's eyes were bright.

Haughtily Miss Sowill repeated.

"Thank you," brightly said Hortensia. "And, say—I wish you'd take one of those long white plumes that wasn't sold. I'd like to give you a present."

Miss Sowill was mystified. "What for?" she asked. She got no reply.

PRESENTLY in sauntered Mr. Pollerson.

"Where's your partner?" he asked with tantalizing geniality.

"I s'pose you mean Ellena," said Hor-

tensia calmly. "But you know she aint really my partner, though out of politeness I've always called her so."

"Huh?"—sharply.

"Oh my, no. I had this store before I ever saw her. But she has worked faithfully for me all these years, and when she's married, I'll let her have all the hats she wants—at cost,"—generously.

"Say! You can't pull any trick like that over me," scoffed Isaiah. "I s'pose she don't own forty acres in partnership with you, either!"

Hortensia's bland smile just wavered toward a drawer wherein lay a deed wrongly typed and so not recorded. "If you can find any papers proving that I and Ellena Buskey own anything in common except a bottle of liniment,"—blithely,—"I'll give you all those papers stand for."

Truth has a ring all its own. The listener recognized it, and yielded gracefully.

"But I guess you could hardly run the store without her help," he suggested pleasantly. "At least, she thinks so. And so,"—regretfully,—"she turned me down."

Hortensia glared. Oh, the gall of him!

"But I might have known," he added, with a sincerity real or assumed, "that a clever woman like you would hardly need a partner. How nice you fix your hair!"—he went on admiringly. "I always wondered why Ellena didn't comb hers in three pretty rolls."

Now, Hortensia Ray had always been the least bit vain of her stylish coiffure. Her eyes involuntarily went pleasedly to the mirror opposite. Then she stepped violently toward Isaiah Pollerson. "Get out!" she said.

He got out. Hortensia went back to the trimming-room where Ellena was waiting. "He's gone,"—without looking directly at Ellena . . . "Maybe we better put fresh wings on that rose-and-brown stovepipe. One is broken, and Jane Hennessy has tried it on time and again."

"Maybe we better," placidly agreed Ellena.

"'Funeral' is right. Young Terry'll kill you."



# The Good Little Man

*THE girl's name was Josephine—which  
reminds one of Napoleon and Waterloo.*

By Octavus Roy Cohen

Author of "For Love of Sheila," etc.

**I**T is possible that had Napoleon's love for theatric effects been less consuming, he would never have marched to Moscow. And it follows that if his army had not been broken in spirit and in health by the rather ignominious retreat, the tale of Waterloo and the subsequent history of Europe would not read as they do now.

But the fact remains that Napoleon did march to Moscow because he believed that the world was his oyster and his men were supermen. Victory turned the head of the world's greatest tactician, and therefore it is not surprising that Kid Casey, lightweight champion of the world, and greatest of all champions in point of cleverness, should imagine himself the master of Young Terry, the world's welterweight champion.

The name of the girl was Josephine, which is the principal reason the Na-

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poleonic simile suggested itself. The Josephine of this story varied in many respects from her of the Napoleonic era, but she played as important a part in the lives of the principals as the famous heroine of history. And as we are interested in the dramatis personæ of this story—to the introductions:

Kid Casey had risen meteorically from the ranks of mediocrity, partly by reason of his mule-kick punch and mostly because he was unbelievably clever. It was said of him that he never wasted a quarter of an inch in ducking a vicious swing or a tantalizing jab, and that his percentage of effective counters was little short of perfect—and a counter is not easy, even for the best of boxers.

Kid Casey had tarried but a short while in the realm of semi-finals. He'd filled in one night at the Far Rockaway Club in a bout with a well-known lightweight. He finished the said celebrity

without extending himself, and the sport writers began to sit up and take notice.

Thereafter it was a case of finding a lightweight to whip Casey. And not until he finished the champion of the world in the eighth round of their scrap in Los Angeles did the sporting world realize that for the present they must be content to see the belt worn by a man whom all acclaimed worthy.

But Young Terry, king of the welterweights,—although many said that he couldn't make even the revised weight,—was hailed as a second Joe Wolcott. His rise to the top of the welterweight heap had been more normal than that of Kid Casey in the next lower division, but none the less spectacular.

Young Terry had for some time been heard of among contending welters. He was a rushing, tearing fighter, with a finishing punch in each hand—an asset which more than compensated for his astounding lack of cleverness. A ring general he was, too, but not clever, and heavy as a cart-horse on his feet. "The Rock of Gibraltar" they called him after the Knockout Davis scrap—a fight during which he had stood a bombardment for seventeen rounds and then finished his opponent with a punch.

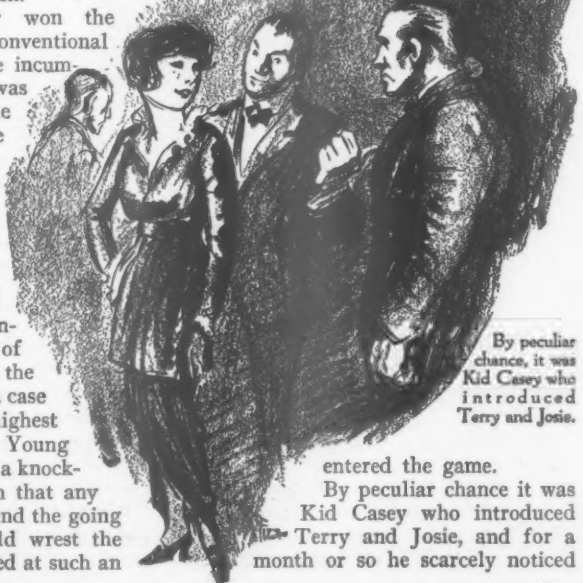
Young Terry never won the championship by the conventional method of whipping the incumbent. Such a course was plainly impossible, for the simple reason that there was no welterweight champion to whip—and there had not been for years. But he battered his way unqualifiedly to the top rank of 145-pounders, and there was none to gainsay him. Let any man of his class raise a claim to the title, and it was merely a case of which promoter bid highest for the match. And Young Terry invariably won by a knockout. It was said of him that any man clever enough to stand the going for the full route would wrest the title. Terry merely smiled at such an

insinuation and tensed his bulgy muscles.

Josephine—Josie, as she was called—had risen from a cash-girl to one of the best saleswomen in Kahler's huge department-store, with a pay-envelope which allowed her many luxuries and a sense of independence. Because of this independence she viewed the prospects of matrimony in a light utterly different from that of her co-workers. Marriage did not appear to her in the light of a haven from drudgery; instead, she determined to marry well—financially—and for love. Truly, an ideal combination.

She met Kid Casey at a racket given for the benefit of a retired middleweight champion—a pathetic figure, by the way, who has nothing to do with this story: victorious over men and conquered by the Great White Plague. There had been an immediate mutual attraction—not Marlowe's love at first sight, but still an undoubted attraction, which would probably have ripened quickly into mature love had not

Young Terry



By peculiar chance, it was Kid Casey who introduced Terry and Josie.

entered the game.

By peculiar chance it was Kid Casey who introduced Terry and Josie, and for a month or so he scarcely noticed

their growing intimacy. But when one day he saw Josie blush on being teased about the welterweight champion, his jaw grew grim and he wondered whether his much-vaunted cleverness could—

The climax was reached when he asked Josie to accompany him to an oyster-roast at South Beach and she refused. Merely because he had nothing else to do, Kid Casey went,—stag,—and the first persons he saw were Josie and Young Terry. He would have passed them with a rigid bow had not Josie restrained him.

"After I told you I couldn't go," she said swiftly, "Mabel called up to break the date I had with her. I tried everywhere to get you—and I couldn't. Then Terry asked me, and I knew I'd meet you here."

"Did you call the gym?"—coldly.

"No—"

"I was there—an' you knew it! But I aint one of them guys who butts in when they aint wanted. S'long!"

He turned away and did not see Josie's impulsively outstretched arm. Terry, a good fellow with a big heart, called him back:

"Don't be sore, Kid. She didn't mean nothin'—"

Kid Casey whirled, his face scarlet.

"You keep y'r tongue outa other people's business," he snarled tactlessly.

"You hunk o' cheese!"

Terry laughed.

"G'wan, kidlets. Y'r touchy as a fuse. Cheer up. The worst is yet to come."

Altogether a tactless conversation on both sides, and it started the ball rolling.

Later when Josie called him again for the purpose of explaining more fully and without Terry present, the Kid insolently slammed the receiver on the hook. Josie grew white with anger and vowed she'd never speak to the Kid again, but, although she did not know it,—nor did he,—Casey's stock was higher above par at that moment than it ever had been.

Of course, she shouldn't have gone with Young Terry after turning the Kid down—but the damage was done. Casey didn't know that she was penitent, and he read the handwriting on the wall with reverse English. The ill-feeling he held

toward Terry became an obsession, and the obsession grew into a mild, and then a bitter, hatred—as any emotion will grow when left, like a parasite, to feed on its parent body.

Less than two weeks later he thought of his own Moscow—and sought Sam Levy, his manager.

"I want you to match me with Young Terry," he said abruptly.

Levy's jaw dropped.

"Huh?"

"You heard me. I wanna fight Young Terry for the welterweight championship of the world."

"Twenty rounds, I s'pose?" remarked the manager with biting sarcasm.

"Sure."

He glanced sharply at his protégé. Kid Casey's face was very serious. But Levy could not believe the evidence of his senses.

"You aint been drinkin', Kid, have you?"

"No, I aint been drinkin', and I aint bughouse. I think I can lick Young Terry—and we'd make a fortune on the match."

"Mebbe you aint been drinkin'—but you *are* bughouse. What makes you think you kin lick Terry?"

"I know it."

"Sure—an' I know that the moon is about a million miles away from here, but kin I prove it?"

"Whose funeral is this, anyway?" snapped the fighter. "Mine or yours?"

"Yours—an' 'funeral' is right. Young Terry'll kill you!"

"Yeh? I don't know about that—"

"The trouble wit' you, Kid," vouchsafed Levy kindly, "is that your nut's all swelled. Y'r the best 133-pounder who ever stepped inside the ropes, 'less'n it be Joe Gans, but you aint no welterweight."

"He couldn't hit me."

"Don't try to kid y'rself, Casey. This is the old proposition of the fight game: a good big man kin always whip a good little man—"

"An' a good little man kin always whip a big dub."

"Not even that—always. Joe Wolcott, who first made the remark that 'the bigger they are, the harder they fall,' struck

a snag when he met Ed Dunkhorst. An' remember, Dunkhorst was an ice-cart, while Terry is a real, twenty-four-carat champ. One punch, and,"—he snapped his fingers expressively,—“good-night!”

Levy paced the room slowly. He knew the nature of the Kid, and he was worried. He faced him, hands on hips.

“You know what it means?” he asked quietly.

“Yeh, I know what it means—sure. If I’m licked—I’m licked, an’ I don’t lose nothin’ but the fat end of the purse. If I win, I’m lightweight and welter-weight champion of the world.”

“Mebbe you’ll go after Jess Willard then, eh?”

Casey did not deign to notice the sarcasm.

“The managers from here to the Coast will tumble all over themselves biddin’ for the match. And we’ll pull in enough shekels to found a Home for Fighters’ Families. The tin’ll pour in. If I lose—a welter whipped me, and that’s all. I’m still lightweight champ—”

“Yeh! an’ you will have taken a lickin’ that’ll put you outa commish. What good was Tom Sharkey after Jim Jeffries pounded him into a jelly? How much was left of Battlin’ Nelson after Ad Wolgast battered him for forty rounds? Y’re all wrong, all wrong!”

“I tol’ you what I wanted to do. You gonna match me, or have I gotta do it myself?”

“You’re sure?”

“Dead sure!”

Their eyes clashed. Levy nodded resignedly.

“Of all the uncaptured fools,” he remarked cheerfully, “you’re the king. But what you say goes.” Then suddenly he turned. “Where is the joker?” he demanded.

Kid Casey reddened.

“None o’ y’r cussed business,” he retorted. “But if it’ll ease y’r mind any—there *is* a joker—an’ she’s a queen!”

NO pugilistic event, save the Jeffries-Johnson Fourth-of-July farce at Reno in 1910, ever excited the fighting world as did the Young Terry-Kid Casey match. There was no question of that from the start.

Battles between rushing, tearing fighters and superlatively clever men were not uncommon occurrences—

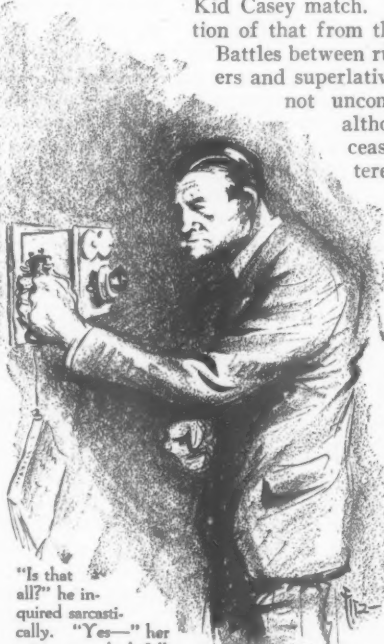
although they never ceased to excite keen interest. In this case the

interest was intensified by the weight disparity and, further, by the fact that two world’s champions, each in the height of fame and power, were to clash.

The dope-books became thumb-marked with eager porings. Veterans recalled the meeting between Abe Attell, then featherweight champion of the world, and Matt Wells, then English lightweight

champion, in Madison Square Garden shortly after the Frawley law had pried off the lid in New York. Wells, clever, but undoubtedly the inferior of Attell as a boxing artist, had won through each of the ten rounds. Superior weight.

Kid Casey was conceded to be cleverer than Attell in his palmiest days, and Young Terry not so clever as Wells. But Terry was a greater fighter than



“Is that all?” he inquired sarcastically. “Yes—” her voice was doubtfully tremulous. “Good-by!”

And the Kid’s receiver

crashed onto the hook.



Wells ever dreamed of being, and the difference in weight was greater than between the fighters in the older-day fight.

At first the public called Kid Casey a fool, but then it became known that he had sought the match, and they wondered. Sport writers likened the young lightweight unto Alexander, who sighed for more worlds to conquer, and grudgingly admitted that he stood a slim chance—for, as a man, they wanted him to win: not that Young Terry was unpopular, but merely that they were with the under dog.

It was not for the writers or the public to know that a girl was mixed up in the fight. And as for Josie, she was worrying her heart out and longing for a chance to "make up" with the Kid—principally because she realized that he was making this rash move because of her thoughtlessness. Kid Casey only knew that he hated Young Terry and that he wanted to make a fool of him in the ring.

Yet as the day for the battle approached, he realized that he had taken unto himself a Herculean task. First-hand reports from the training-camp of the welterweight champion apprised him of the fact that Terry did not look on the fight contemptuously—rather, that he regarded it as one of the hardest battles of his career, and was training accordingly.

And as memory of Josie became somewhat dulled by the passage of time, during which she was with him in thought but not in person, Kid Casey dreamed great dreams of the glory that would be his in the event of victory. Then would he be able to return to Josie as King, and somewhat superciliously offer her two crowns. Truly an ambition worthy of an Emperor.

One week before the battle, Josie telephoned the Kid. She was sorry for what had happened, she told him, and wished him luck. The Kid waited until she had finished her little speech.

"Is that all?" he inquired sarcastically.

"Yes—" her voice was doubtfully tremulous.

"Good-by!" And the Kid's receiver crashed onto the hook.

Quite different was the good-by between Josie and Young Terry. The welterweight was very quiet and self-contained.

"The Kid must love you a heap," he commented.

She sniffed.

"Not too much. Who's gonna win?"

"I am!"—confidently.

"If you do, will you be lightweight champion?"

"No. We're fighting at the welter limit."

"If he wins will he be the welterweight champion?"

"Yes."

There was a silence between them. Then, quite suddenly and very quietly, Young Terry asked Josie to marry him. And very quietly she refused.

"Come and see me after the fight," she remarked. He eyed her curiously, then said good-by and left. The girl stared at her reflection in the polished mirror—but she didn't smile. Somehow there was nothing funny in the situation to her. Marriage was a big thing—and she wished to marry for love, provincial-hearted little thing that she was despite her city veneer.

THE arena was jammed. Overhead the sun streamed down on the animated scene, warming the coatless throng, making fetid the breezes laboriously begotten of the waving sea of palmetto fans.

About the ringside the telegraph-instruments clicked in staccato chorus. Soft-drink venders, loudly proclaiming the iciness of their wares, reaped a harvest. The very air buzzed with speculation—and collars wilted while the crowd waited impatiently through the hours, for the arena had filled early with the eager spectators.

There was comparatively little betting. What wagering there was showed Kid Casey on the short end of 3-to-2 odds. It was the old, old story of the good little man and the good big man. But despite the apparent certainty of Terry's victory, the fight gourmands licked their chops, figuratively speaking, and leaned back in their seats to await the choice feast.



Young Terry was first in the ring, a gaudy bathrobe of Bulgarian pattern covering his scanty fighting trunks. He smiled his genial crooked smile to those of his friends within recognizing distance and waved impartial greetings to others who waved at him from the dense crowd. He danced lightly about the ring, testing the flooring. Then he swung back and forth on the padded ropes, pausing now and then to rub his feet in the little mound of powdered resin near his own corner.

Kid Casey, with sweater and trousers over his fighting-costume, leaped through the ropes, and again the multitude roared applause. When the two fighters gripped hands, Casey refused to let his eyes meet those of his antagonist; he was afraid of himself, afraid that he might see a sneer there—and start the fight with a sudden blow.

He thirsted for the beginning of the battle, eager to show up this champion as the lumbering cart-horse he was. Yet he knew that his task would not be easy. He realized that one instant of relaxation after the gong should have sent them at each other, would spell defeat. The idea that he might lose never occurred to him.

Not until all the other celebrities at the ringside had been introduced and the announcer had bellowed his clarion-speech to all parts of the arena, until gloves had been selected and tied, and the men called to the center for final instructions which always immediately precede the gong, did the men strip fully and stand shoulder to shoulder with their widely different physical make-ups showing in vivid contrast.

Kid Casey, the lightweight, was slender and wiry, his muscles long and ripply, his skin fair, his face boyish. Young Terry was broader and with forbiddingly huge muscles. His jaw was more square, and his flesh was mottled. To the majority of those in the audience, and especially those who had never seen Kid Casey in action, permission for the fight to start seemed little short of criminal.

And then—they were in their corners, hands on the ropes as they caressed their fingers into the five-ounce gloves,

standing back to back and rubbing their feet nervously on the resin.

The audience was hushed. Kid Casey took a last inventory. In a few seconds the Rubicon would have been crossed. The battle was for twenty rounds,—the conventional three minutes with the minute intermission,—which meant that for one hour and nineteen minutes he should have to be constantly on the alert, every nerve and muscle under perfect control. And he knew that any blow which impaired his vision would mean the loss of the battle.

The gong!

The men slipped from their corners and touched gloves. Casey surveyed the man before him impartially—merely as a man who must be avoided—and yet whipped. It seemed easy; his cleverness was superb, and he held the lumbering welter in contempt. Despite the appallingly limited confines of their plain of battle, he did not lose a whit of his self-confidence—nor did he make the foolish mistake of too far underrating Young Terry.

Casey threw himself into long-range sparring pose, weight well back on the right foot, left tap-tapping the floor after the manner of a fencing-master, left hand extended tentatively, right drawn loosely back, playing cautiously up and down his own body from the pit of the abdomen to the solar plexus. His jaw he protected merely by the lightning quickness of his eye and his ability to see a blow traveling toward him and yet move his head in time for it to whiz futilely past.

The men circled warily around each other. Each knew that Casey's game was to wait for an attack from Terry, to use the cross-arm defense until the attack should have been exhausted or the attacker left open at some vulnerable point—then an uncorking and a vicious whirl of arms.

But Terry made no move to attack, and Casey waited patiently. Some one in the audience laughed, and the snicker became general. Terry flushed slightly and balled himself closer. He sidled in close and closer—and then he catapulted, arms rigid, poised to slam home.

Casey straightened him up with a

stinging left jab, leaped in like lightning and whizzed his right to the stomach. The rush was halted. Casey, demon-like, swept closer. His left hooked twice to the head, and as the welterweight broke ground, Casey's right uppercut to the nose, drawing a stream of blood.

A less clever man would have followed up the seeming overwhelming advantage, but not Casey. He was a lightweight, and Terry was the welterweight Rock of Gibraltar who had been able to withstand the most terrific punches of men as heavy as one hundred and fifty pounds. A knockout might be possible for Casey later in the fight, but with Terry fresh—never!

But the spectators were on their feet as a man, howling maniacally, screaming jargoned advice and imploring one of those cataclysmic reversals which make the fight game what it is. Casey merely smiled and grinned tauntingly at Terry.

Again Terry rushed, deliberately taking the left to the head. But his left arm hooked protectingly to receive the inevitable right cross, and his own right shot swishingly to Casey's short-ribs. The lightweight grunted and backed away. The blow was too high to have great effect, but it hurt—it was the hardest punch Casey had ever received. But still he grinned tauntingly.

For three-quarters of a minute they sparred cautiously at long range, exchanging rights and lefts to the head. Terry rushed again. Casey's right flashed harmlessly by his head, and they clinched, but separated before the referee reached them. Casey landed a right to the jaw and took a hard

left to the chest in exchange, and they fought at close quarters. Then the gong rang!

"Casey's round!" was the verdict of the ringside-manipulated ticker-tape.

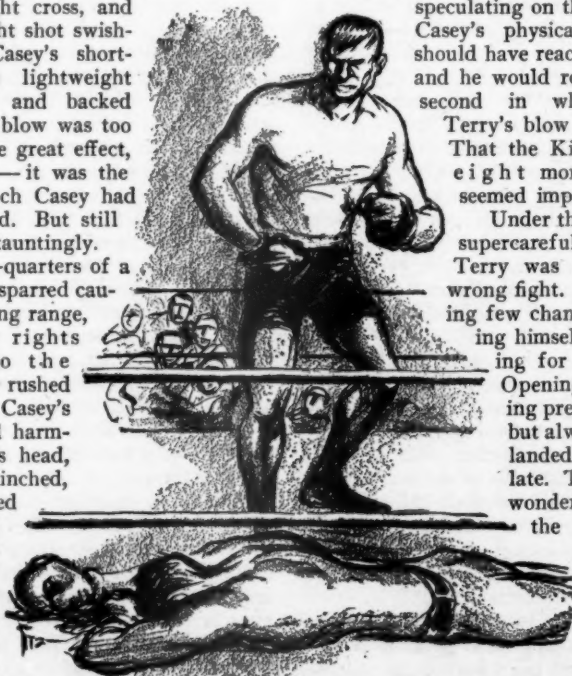
The second round was nearly a repetition of the first, with the advantage more than ever in favor of the smaller man. In the third and fourth he increased his lead, but in the middle of the fifth a terrific right hook to the jaw sent him dazedly to the mat for the count of eight.

It was a fortunate blow for the Kid, for it awakened him to a realization of the fact that he had been fighting carelessly. Thereafter he was more cautious. A victory by the knockout route he did not expect—but he knew that if he could last the twenty rounds the verdict would be his on points. Young Terry was less clever than he had dreamed.

The fight rocked along until the twelfth round, with the points all in favor of the phenomenally clever Kid. The fans were sitting forward in their seats now, shaking their heads wisely and speculating on the time when Casey's physical endurance should have reached its limit, and he would relax for that second in which Young Terry's blow would land. That the Kid could last eight more rounds seemed impossible.

Under the advice of a supercareful handler, Terry was fighting the wrong fight. He was taking few chances, contenting himself with waiting for an opening. Opening after opening presented itself, but always his blow landed short—or late. The Kid was wonderful. When

the sixteenth round started and the Kid leaped from his corner apparently as



A terrific right hook to the jaw sent him dazedly to the mat.

fresh as at the beginning of the fight, Terry's jaw grew a trifle more grim, and his lips straightened into a determined white line. Hereafter he intended to fight the battle his own way. The score was against him thus far, and nothing short of a knockout could win for him.

He burrowed his jaw between humped shoulder-blades, held his arms tensely parallel, covered solar plexus and the point of the jaw, and waded in.

Kid Casey sensed the altered plan of attack and braced himself for what he knew to be the first real test of the fight. Not a bit less confident than at the beginning, his freshness of appearance was a mere sham: the terrific pace, the fearful nervous strain, had told on his nerve and on his very physical endurance. Besides, every one of Terry's few blows had been effective, and Casey was hurt—though, gamely, he did not show it.

Terry, on the other hand, was battered and bloody from the constant, never-ending, stinging fusillade of gloves—but he was not hurt. He was as contemptuous of Casey's ability to knock him out as was Casey of Terry's skill. And now it had narrowed to the real battle—Terry's generalship, determination, stamina and punch against Casey's nerve and cleverness.

As the Germans attacked the Allies at St. Mihiel, so came Young Terry, firmly, steadily, inexorably, unmindful of the fierce, cutting, blood-bringing blows of the desperate Kid. Casey slammed at will, hooking, jabbing, up-percutting, and still Terry bored in. The Kid sidestepped, countered from a light left with a hard left to the wind and danced to the center of the ring.

Immediately Terry turned, grim and silent, and bored after him. Closer and closer he came. Again Casey sidestepped, hooked for the jaw and danced away, but this time he felt the scrape of the ropes on his bare back. The first faint trace of doubt entered his heart: Terry had determined to force him into a corner and then close with him. After that—

Around and around the ring they went, Casey slamming frantically for head and body and landing almost at

will. But he was breaking ground, and he knew that his blows, although spectacular, were not effective. And then the gong sounded. The masses rose and howled approval to Casey. But Terry grinned at his lighter opponent, and Casey understood. The round was Casey's—but, once cornered, the fight was Terry's.

Terry pursued the same slow, inexorable tactics in the seventeenth, and then again in the eighteenth. At the end of the eighteenth round, Casey, with the plaudits and the wild encouragement of the crowd ringing in his ears, staggered to his corner, spent—or nearly so. He felt that he would gladly give up his entire share of the purse were it the end of the twentieth rather than of the eighteenth. On paper, two rounds—six minutes of fighting, and, at that, with a minute's rest between each three-minute period—seems little; but to the man whose stamina has been sapped and who senses the confidence of his opponent, it is terrifying.

The gong aroused him as though from a dream. The rest had sapped his little remaining strength—not restored it, for during the minute he had relaxed. Those who have never boxed—or fought—probably cannot understand the terror of knowing that one must fight on, must appear to be confident.... Thought of quitting never occurred to Casey: he was not of that sort. But he saw defeat staring him in the face, and he knew that Terry knew he saw it.

With a nimbleness which cost him a twinge of nervous agony, he summoned a smile to his still unbattered lips and leaped to the center of the ring. The spectators cheered.

"Kill 'im, Kid! You got 'im this round!"

Terry sidled closer.

"They got the dope lopsided, aint they?" he asked grimly. Casey swung for the jaw and missed a foot.

Like a flash Terry was in, his guard entirely down, both hands flailing for any and every vulnerable point. Ringsiders and spectators held their breath in wonder. The apparently victorious Kid Casey was scarcely defending himself.

"I didn't see the blow land," remarked

one newspaper man. "When did he hit 'im?"

Bob Green, the greatest sporting authority in the country, and the only man of them who fully understood, smiled grimly.

"Once or twice each round for eighteen rounds," he replied softly.

Desperately Casey clinched, and hung on like a leech. The referee called for the break—then leaped between them and forced them apart by the sheer strength of his brawny arms. The Kid sidled around his form and bored into another clinch.

"Break!"

Terry tore away and then shot in again. Casey tried to clinch, and Terry's right crossed to the jaw. Casey crashed to his haunches.

At the count of nine he staggered gamely to his feet, only to go down before a terrific left to the jaw—thereby just missing a right which would have ended the fight had it landed.

"The good little man," mouthed Sam Levy sorrowfully, "is never as good as a good big man!"

Again the "Nine" had left the referee's somewhat reluctant lips when Casey arose. The fickle crowd was howling for Terry now, eager to see a knock-out, at no matter what cost.

Three times more in the nineteenth round Kid Casey took the count, yet at the gong he was on his feet, staggering weakly—and covering instinctively. Sam Levy helped him to his corner, and his seconds worked over his bruised body like Trojans.

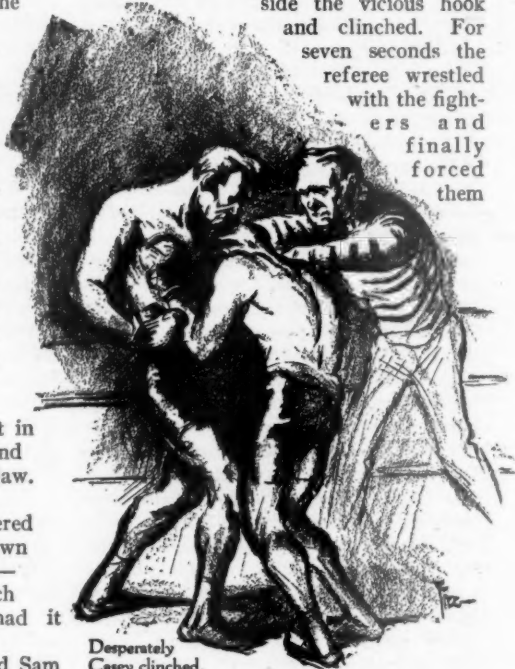
Ten seconds before the gong at the commencement of the twentieth round Terry ordered his seconds from the ring and climbed to his feet. At the gong he leaped across the ring, and touched Casey's hands.

The crowd was breathless. It was Casey's fight on points by a good margin—yet one blow would give Terry the victory.

"I'm comin'!" half-snarled the welterweight.

Spasmodically Kid Casey leaped in-

side the vicious hook and clinched. For seven seconds the referee wrestled with the fighters and finally forced them



Desperately Casey clinched.

apart. Again Terry bored in. This time his right landed and Casey went down. Slowly, painfully, he crawled to his feet.

This time Casey clinched twice before going down again. Then he staggered to his feet—seeing only a specter of the demon before him, obsessed by the one idea: he must last out the fight! Men at the ringside declared it the greatest battle, and the greatest finish, the prize ring had ever known. They considered the fight as good as over, and the sport writers—some of them—had already scrawled the words "Young Terry wins by a knockout in the twentieth."

But the Kid hung on with the desperation born of despair. Terry, knowing that every second counted, cursed and shook him off. His right and left landed. The body of the Kid sagged—dropped.

In the roar of the crowd, and with the dazing turmoil in his head, he could not hear the referee's voice, and he could not count the fearful strokes of the referee's arm. So it was that he fought to

his feet at the count of seven. The house roared.

Terry leaped in again. Above the noise came to the ears of the Kid the voice of Terry's chief handler.

"Half-minute more!"

Half a minute! Half a century! He clinched!

The grip of a dead man is terrific. So was the grip of the battered fighter almost unbreakable. For fifteen seconds they wrestled about the ring. Then the referee ripped them apart; Terry whipped a right and left to the jaw, and the Kid again went down.

For a second his body relaxed, and Terry's seconds stood ready to leap into the ring and take their man on their shoulders. Then Kid Casey thought of what it all meant—and vaguely, of Josie—and he was on his feet, swaying, blind, but on his feet.

He had won. Less than ten seconds were left, and he had not been knocked out! Imbued with a sudden accession of strength, he waded punily in, and when the gong sounded for the end of the fight, he was hitting weakly at the infuriated Terry.

The referee gazed at the lightweight in wonder. Then he raised his arm above his head in token of victory!

Kid Casey had stayed the twenty rounds and won on points! He stood crowned two-times champion of the world!

Then he collapsed. Young Terry lifted his body gently and carried him to his corner.

"Gamest man I ever saw," he muttered bravely, although his own heart seemed nigh to breaking with disappointment. "He deserves to win!" Such is the spirit of the ring.

TWO weeks later Kid Casey, light- and welter-weight champion of the world, presented himself before Josie. He had forgotten the nearness of defeat, and remembered only the big-typed praises of the press, and his pictures covering columns—and the signed vaudeville contract in his pocket.

"You threw me over for that dub, Josie," he remarked. "But I aint so sore as you might think. Will you marry me?"

The girl smiled wanly.

"No, I'll not marry you. I—I'm afraid your nature aint the kind I'd get along with."

"But—"

"But I'll marry the dub you licked—if he ever asks me!"

## Why Do Authors Never Make Their Heroes Fat Men?

DO you realize that the heroes whose romances and adventures you follow are almost invariably tall, broad-shouldered, slender young fellows? It's a fact. ¶But finally a writer has shown the courage to make a two-hundred-and-thirty-pound dry-goods merchant his hero. ¶Roger McGillicuddy is the hero's name, and Meredith Nicholson is the author. The combination gives one of the best stories you ever read.

### "SITTING UP WITH SUSAN"

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In The August Issue Of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE, ON THE NEWS-STANDS JULY 23rd.



## A Complete Résumé of the Opening Chapters of Mrs. Ward's New Novel

**M**RS. HUMPHRY WARD, who probably knows more geniuses than any other living woman, gives, in this her latest novel, the other side: the side of the wife of the genius, who is expected smilingly to await her lord in some unobtrusive corner while women who "understand" him, lionize and pet him.

Arthur Meadows is a writer with expensive tastes and small income who for years has spent twice as much as he makes, and has done it with enjoyment, while his wife Doris has stood off debts by selling her drawings, and waited on him. Suddenly he begins to succeed and becomes noticed by Lady Dunstable, an Englishwoman of position and important connections.

Lady Dunstable is a "man's woman." She simply tolerates or wholly ignores the wives of the men she wants to admit to her circle.

She invites Meadows and his wife to spend the week-end at her country place, Crosby Ledgers. So Doris "does up" her well worn clothes, takes her housemaid as personal maid to save appearances—and finds that as usual the genius forgets to notice how his wife fares when he is under the magic of Lady Dunstable's company.

The first day, at tea, Meadows is singled out by Lady Dunstable's conversation while Doris is left out. After tea Lady Dunstable tells Doris in a way that makes it a command that she will want to rest till dinner in her room. So, during the hours that Doris is miserably lonely and hot in her room, Lady Dunstable takes Meadows to walk about her beautiful place.

While at Crosby Ledgers, Doris learns that Lady Dunstable has monstrously cruel manners. At one time the great lady, in search of interest, invited a near-by curate's daughter to stop with her. After bringing the frightened girl

halfway to Crosby Ledgers, Lady Dunstable suddenly decided she wasn't interesting after all, turned about and took the insulted girl home. She also learns that Lady Dunstable's twenty-two-year-old son is a failure.

Through the visit Lady Dunstable constantly makes Meadows the lion, and Doris is pushed into a corner. Doris protests to Meadows, but he tells her it's only her ill humor and lack of wisdom in failing to see how the attention of Lady Dunstable and her friends is making him a famous man. Doris droops and when they return home, spends more and more time on her drawings.

**T**HEN comes an invitation ostensibly to both from Lady Dunstable, to visit at her Scotland place for three weeks at the end of the season. Meadows decides to go, although it is made evident that Doris is not wanted. Also invitations to luncheons and dinners arrive that do not include Doris. She fights to keep her self-control, but gradually there comes an estrangement between herself and Meadows, who is flattered by it all and does not notice the slights to his wife. Others do, however, and Lady Dunstable's attention to the genius becomes a scandal.

Doris cheerfully prepares Meadows for the Scotland visit and does not give him any chance to pity her. He goes, eager for the vacation. She spends the time drawing in her uncle's studio. There she meets Lady Dunstable's weakling son Herbert. He comes in tow of a coarse Neapolitan model, who has the boy completely in her power. Doris feels that Lady Dunstable is to be well paid for neglecting the boy to keep other women's husbands near her, but Miss Wigram, the studio accountant, who is the girl Lady Dunstable insulted, startles her by urging that Herbert Dunstable must be saved from the siren, for his father's sake.





Madame  
Vavasour

# A Great Success

*A new novel—the story of the wife of a genius—by the author of  
"The Marriage of William Ashe," "Robert Elsmere," etc.*

By Mrs. Humphry Ward

## CHAPTER IV

ILLUSTRATED  
BY C. H. TAFFS

**W**HEN Doris reached home that evening, the little Kensington house, with half its carpets up and all but two of its rooms under dust-sheets, looked particularly lonely and unattractive. Arthur's study was unrecognizable—no cheerful litter anywhere, no smell of tobacco, no sign of a male presence! Doris, walking restlessly from room to room, had never felt so forsaken, so dismally certain that the best of life was done. Moreover she had fully expected to find a letter from Arthur waiting for her; and there was nothing.

It was positively comic that under such circumstances anybody should expect her, Doris Meadows, to trouble her head about Lady Dunstable's affairs. Of course she would feel it, if her son made a ridiculous and degrading marriage. But why not? Why shouldn't he come to grief like anybody's else son? Why should heaven and earth be moved in order to prevent it?—especially by the woman to whose possible jealousy and pain Lady Dunstable had certainly never given the most passing thought.

All the same, the distress shown by that odd girl, Miss Wigram, and her appeal both to the painter and his niece

to intervene and save the foolish youth, kept echoing in Doris' memory, although neither she nor Bentley had received it with any cordiality. Doris had soon made out that this Alice Wigram was indeed the clergyman's daughter whom Lady Dunstable had snubbed so unkindly some twelve months before. She was evidently a sweet-natured, susceptible creature to whom Lord Dunstable had taken a fancy in his fatherly way, during occasional visits to her father's rectory, and of whom he had spoken kindly to his wife.

That Lady Dunstable should have unkindly slighted this motherless girl, who had evidently plenty of natural capacity under her shyness, was just like that tyrant, and Doris' feelings of antagonism to her were only sharpened by acquaintance with the victim. Why should Miss Wigram worry herself? Lord Dunstable? Well, but after all, capable men should keep such wives in order. If Lord Dunstable had not been scandalously weak, Lady Dunstable would not have become a terror to her sex.

As for Uncle Charles, he had simply declined all responsibility in the matter. He had never seen the Dunstables, wouldn't know them from Adam, and had no concern whatever in what happened to their son. The situation merely

excited in him one man's natural amusement at the folly of another. The boy was more than of age. Really, he and his mother must look after themselves. To meddle with a young man's love affairs, simply because he happened to visit your studio in the company of a lady, would be outrageous. So the painter laughed, shook his head and went back to his picture.

Then Miss Wigram, looking despondently from the silent Doris to the artist at work, had said with sudden energy, "I must find out about her! I'm—I'm sure she's a horrid woman! Can you tell me, sir,"—she addressed Bentley,—“the name of the gentleman who was painting her before she came here?”

Bentley had hummed and hawed a little, twisting his red mustache, and finally had given the name and address; whereupon Miss Wigram had gathered up her papers, some of which had drifted to the floor between her table and Doris' easel, and had taken an immediate departure, a couple of hours before her usual time, throwing, as she left the studio, a wistful and rather puzzled look at Mrs. Meadows.



When Doris reached home that evening, the little Kensington house, with half-ing restlessly from room to room, she had never felt so forsaken, so circumstances anybody should expect her, Doris

DORIS congratulated herself that she had kept her own counsel on the subject of the Dunstables, both with Uncle Charles and Miss Wigram. Neither of



its carpets up and all but two of its rooms under dust-sheets, looked particularly lonely and unattractive. Walk-dismally certain that the best of life was done. It was positively comic that under such Meadows, to trouble her head about Lady Dunstable's affairs.

them had guessed that she had any personal acquaintance with them. She tried now to put the matter out of her thoughts. Jane brought in a tray for her

mistress, and Doris supped meagerly in Arthur's deserted study, thinking, as the sunset light came in across the dusty street, of that flame and splendor which

such weather must be kindling on the moors, of the blue and purple distances, the glens of rocky mountains hung in air—"the gleam, the shadow, and the peace supreme!" She remembered how on their September honeymoon they had wandered in Ross-shire, how the whole land was dyed crimson by the heather, and how impossible it was to persuade Arthur to walk discreetly, rather than, like any cockney tripper, with his arm round his sweetheart. Scotland had not been far behind the Garden of Eden under those circumstances. But Arthur was now pursuing the higher, the intellectual joys.

She finished her supper and then sat down to write to her husband. Was she going to tell him anything about the incident of the afternoon? Why should she? Why should she give him a chance of becoming more than ever Lady Dunstable's friend—pegging out an eternal claim upon her gratitude?

Doris wrote her letter. She described the progress of the spring cleaning; she reported that her sixth illustration was well forward and that Uncle Charles was wrestling with another historical picture, a *machine* neither better nor worse than all the others. She thought that after all Jane would soon give warning; and she, Doris, had spent three pounds in petty cash since he went away—how, she could not remember, but it was all in her account-book. And she concluded:

I understand, then, that we meet at Crewe on Friday fortnight? I have heard of a lodging near Capel Curig which sounds delightful. We might do a week's climbing and then go on to the sea. I really *shall* want a holiday. Has there not been ten minutes even, since you arrived, to write a letter in—or a post-card? Shall I send you a few addressed?

Having thus finished what seemed to her the dullest letter she had ever written in her life, she looked at it irresolutely awhile, then hastily put it in an envelope, addressed and stamped it, and rang the bell for Jane to run across the street to the letter-box with it. Then Doris sat idle a little while, with flushed cheeks, while the twilight gathered.

THE gate of the trim front garden swung on its hinges. Doris turned to look. She saw, to her astonishment, that the girl accountant of the morning, Miss Wigram, was coming up the flagged path to the house. What could she want?

"Oh, Mrs. Meadows, I'm so sorry to disturb you," said the visitor in some agitation, as Doris, summoned by Jane, entered the dust-sheeted drawing-room. "But you dropped an envelope with an address this afternoon. I picked it up with some of my papers and never discovered it till I got home."

She held out the envelope. Doris took it, and flushed vividly. It was the envelope with the Scotch address which Arthur had written out for her before leaving home—"Care of the Lord Dunstable, Franick Castle, Pitlochry, Perthshire, N. B." She had put it in her portfolio, out of which it had no doubt slipped while she was at work.

She and Miss Wigram eyed each other. The girl was evidently agitated, but she seemed not to know how to begin what she had to say.

Doris broke the silence.

"You were astonished to find that I knew the Dunstables?"

"Oh no, I—I didn't think—" stammered her visitor. "I supposed some friend of yours might be staying there?"

"My husband is staying there," said Doris quietly. Really, it was too much trouble to tell a falsehood. Her pride refused.

"Oh, I see!" cried Miss Wigram, though in fact she was more bewildered than before. Why should this extraordinary little lady have behaved at the studio as if she had never heard of the Dunstables, and be now confessing that her husband was actually staying in their house?

Doris smiled, with perfect self-possession.

"Please sit down. You think it odd, of course, that I didn't tell you I knew the Dunstables, while we were talking about them. The fact is I didn't want to be mixed up with the affair at all. We have only lately made acquaintance with the Dunstables. Lady Dunstable is my husband's friend. I don't like her very

much. But neither of us knows her well enough to go and tell her tales about her son."

Miss Wigram considered—her gentle, troubled eyes bent upon Doris. "Of course, I know—how many people dislike Lady Dunstable. She did a—rather 'cruel thing to me once. The thought of it humiliated and discouraged me for a long time. It made me almost glad to leave home. And of course she hasn't won Mr. Herbert's confidence at all. She has always snubbed and disapproved of him. Oh, I knew him very little; I have hardly ever spoken to him. You saw he didn't recognize me this afternoon. But my father used to go over to Crosby Ledgers to coach him in the holidays, and he often told me that as a boy he was *terrified* of his mother. She either took no notice of him at all, or she was always sneering at him and scolding him. As soon as ever he came of age and got a little money of his own, he declared he wouldn't live at home. His father wanted him to go into Parliament or the army, but he said he hated the army, and if he was such a dolt as his mother thought him, it would be ridiculous to attempt politics. And so he just drifted up to town—and looked out for people that would make much of him and wouldn't snub him. And that of course was how he got into the toils of a woman like that!"

The girl threw up her hands tragically.

Doris sat up, with energy.

"But what on earth," she said, "does it matter to you or to me?"

"Oh, can't you see?" said the other, flushing deeply, and with the tears in her eyes. "Lord Dunstable gave my father his living. We lived on that estate for years. Everybody loved Lord Dunstable. And though Lady Dunstable makes enemies, there's a great respect for the *family*. They've been there since Queen Elizabeth's time. And it's *dreadful* to think of a woman like—well, like that—reigning at Crosby Ledgers. I think of the poor people. Lady Dunstable's good to them, though of course you wouldn't hear anything about it unless you lived there. She tries to do her duty to them—she really does, in her

own way. And, of course, they *respect* her. No Dunstable has ever done anything disgraceful! Isn't there something in '*Noblesse oblige*?' Think of this woman at the head of that estate!"

"Well, upon my word," said Doris, after a pause, "you are feudal. Don't you feel yourself that you are old-fashioned?"

MRS. MEADOWS' half-sarcastic look at first intimidated her visitor, and then spurred her into further attempts to explain herself.

"I dare say it's old-fashioned," she said slowly, "but I'm sure it's what Father would have felt. Anyway, I went off to try and find out what I could. I went first to a little club I belong to—for professional women—near the Strand, and I asked one or two women I found there—who know artists and models and write for papers, and very soon I managed to find out a great deal. I didn't have to go to the man whose address Mr. Bentley gave me. Madame Vavasour is a horrid woman! This is not the first young man she's fleeced—by a long way. There was a man—younger than Mr. Dunstable, a boy of nineteen—three years ago. She got him to promise to marry her—and the parents came down and paid her enormously to let him go. Now she's got through all that money, and she boasts she's going to marry young Dunstable before his parents know anything about it. She's going to make sure of a peerage this time. Oh, she's odious! She's greedy, she's vulgar, she's false! And of course"—the girl's eyes grew wide and scared—"there may be other things much worse. How do we know?"

"How do we know indeed!" said Doris, with a shrug. "Well,"—she turned her eyes full upon her guest,—“and what are you going to do?"

An eager look met hers.

"Couldn't you—couldn't you write to Mr. Meadows, and ask him to warn Lady Dunstable?"

Doris shook her head.

"Why don't you do it yourself?"

The girl flushed uncomfortably. "You see, Father quarreled with her about that unkind thing she did to me,—oh, it isn't

worth telling!—but he wrote her an angry letter, and they never spoke afterwards. Lady Dunstable never forgives that kind of thing. If people find fault with her, she just drops them. I don't believe she'd read a letter from me if I sent one!"

"Well—" began Doris, meditating. "But what are the facts? Has the boy actually promised to marry her? She may have been telling lies to my uncle."

"She tells everybody so. I saw a girl who knows her quite well. They write for the same paper—it's a fashion paper. By the way, you saw that hat she had on? She gets them as perquisites from the smart shops she writes about. She has a whole cupboard of them at home, and when she wants money, she sells them for what she can get. Well, she told me that Madame—they call her Madame, though they all know quite well that she's not married, and that her name is Flink—boasts perpetually of her engagement. It seems that he

was ill in the winter—in his lodgings. His mother knew nothing about it; he wouldn't tell her, and Madame nursed him and made a fuss over him. Mr. Dunstable felt he owed her a great deal—and she made scenes and told him she had compromised herself by coming to nurse him—all that kind of nonsense.

And at last he promised to marry her—in writing. And now she's so sure of him that she bullies him; you saw how she ordered him about to-day."

"Well, why doesn't he marry her, if he's such a fool? Why hasn't he married her long ago?" cried Doris.


Miss Wigram looked distressed.

"I don't know. My friend thinks it's

his father. She believes, at least, that he doesn't want to get married without telling Lord Dunstable; and that, of course, means telling his mother. And he hates the thought of the letters and scenes. So he keeps it hanging on; and lately Madame has been furious with him, and is always teasing and sniffing at him. He's dreadfully weak, and my friend's afraid that before he's made up his own mind what to do, that woman will have carried him off to a registry office and got the horrid thing done for good and all."


THERE was silence a moment, after which Doris said—with decision:

"You can't imagine how absurd it seems to me that you should come and ask me to help Lady Dunstable with her son! There is nobody in the world less helpless than Lady Dunstable, and nobody who would be less grateful for being helped. I really cannot meddle with it."



Lady Dunstable

OF all the characters Mrs. Ward has created in her novels, Lady Dunstable and Doris Meadows in this story are the most unusual. The conflict between the cold, domineering noblewoman, who makes a sport of luring other women's husbands, and the devoted Doris, bewildered by the methods and the success of Lady Dunstable, but too proud to cry out, is absorbing in every line. Imagine yourself being called upon to prevent pain to your dearest enemy, and you have the situation which now confronts Doris. If you have not begun "*A Great Success*," read the synopsis on page 496 and begin with this installment. It is a great human story.



Doris Meadows



She rose as she spoke, and Miss Wigram rose too.

"Couldn't you—couldn't you," said the girl pleadingly, "just ask Mr. Meadows to warn Lord Dunstable? I'm thinking of the villagers and of the farmers and the schools—all the people we used to love. Father was there twenty years. To think of the dear place given over, some day, to that creature!"

Her charming eyes actually filled with tears. Doris was touched, but at the same time set on edge. This loyalty that people born and bred in the country feel to our English country system—what an absurd and unreal frame of mind! And when our country system produces Lady Dunstables!

"They have such a pull!" thought Doris angrily, "such a hideously unfair pull, over other people! The way everybody rushes to help them when they get into a mess—to pick up the pieces and sweep it all up! It's irrational; it's sickening! Let them look after themselves and pay for their own misdeeds like the rest of us."

"I can't interfere; I really can't!" she said, straightening her slim shoulders. "It is not as though we were old friends of Lord and Lady Dunstable. Don't you see how very awkward it would be? Let me advise you just to watch the thing a little, and then to apply to somebody in the Crosby Ledgers neighborhood. You must have some friends or acquaintances there, who at any rate could do more than we could. And perhaps, after all, it's a mare's nest, and the young man doesn't mean to marry her at all!"

The girl's anxious eyes scanned Doris' unyielding countenance; then with a sigh she gave up her attempt and said good-by. Doris went with her to the door.

"We shall meet to-morrow, sha'n't we?" she said, feeling a vague compunction. "And I suppose this woman will be there again. You can keep an eye on her. Are you living alone—or are you with friends?"

"Oh, I'm in a boarding-house," said Miss Wigram, hastily. Then, as though she recognized the new softness in Doris' look, she added:

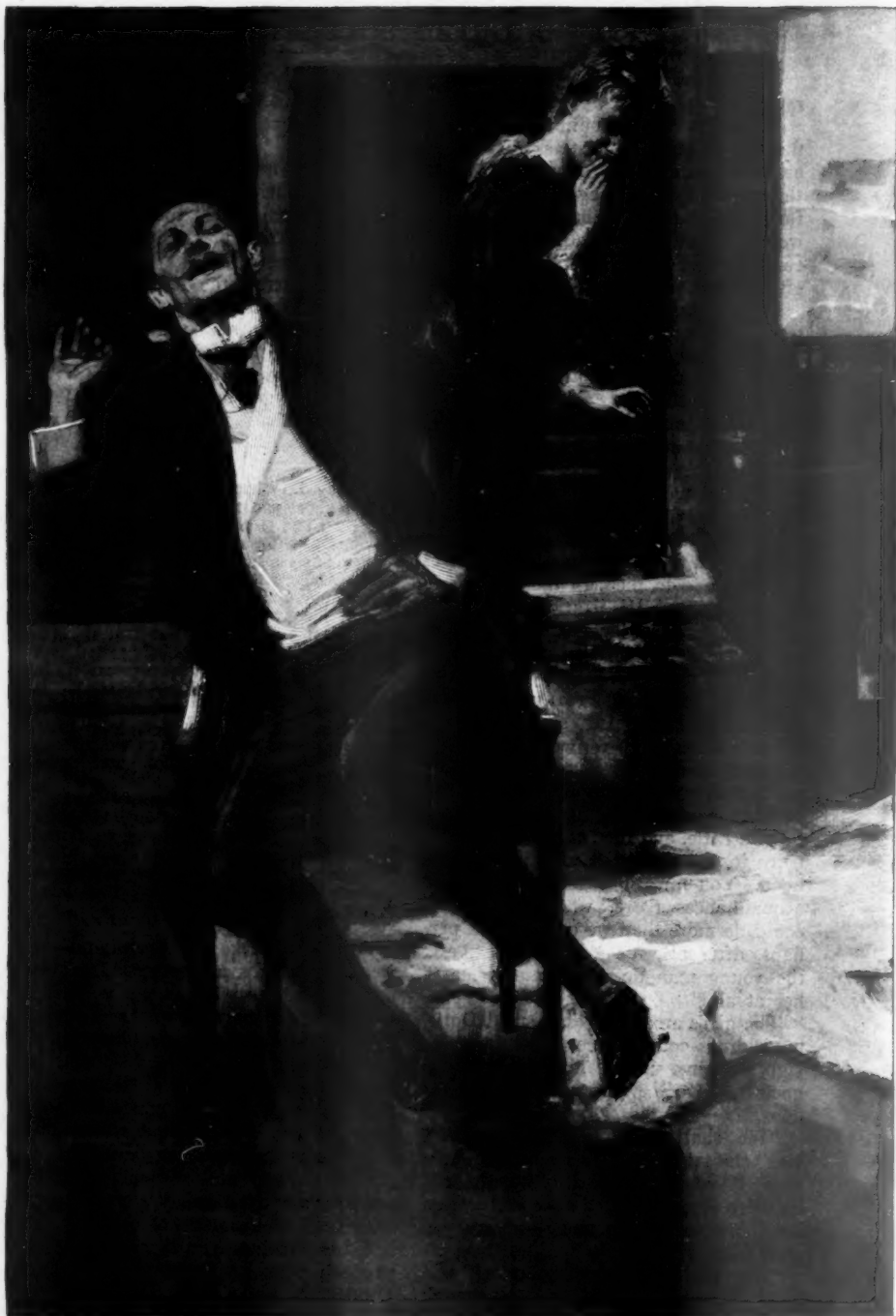
"I'm quite comfortable there; and I've a great deal of work to do. Good-night."

"ALL alone—with that gentle face and that terrible amount of conscience—hard lines!" thought Doris, as she reflected on her visitor. "I felt a black imp beside her!"

All the same, the letter which Mrs. Meadows received by the following morning's mail was not at all calculated to melt the "black imp" further. Arthur wrote in a great hurry to beg that she would not go on with their Welsh plans—for the moment. His letter went on:

Lady D— has insisted on my going on a short yachting cruise with her and Miss Field, the week after next. She wants to show me the West Coast, and they have a small cottage in the Shetlands where we should stay a night or two and watch the sea-birds. It may keep me away another week or fortnight, but you won't mind, dear, will you? I am getting famously rested, and really the house is very agreeable. In these surroundings, Lady Dunstable is less of the *bas bleu* and more of the woman. You must make up your mind to come, another year. You would soon get over your prejudice, and make friends with her. She looks after us all,—she talks brilliantly,—and I haven't seen her rude to anybody since I arrived. There are some very nice people here, and altogether I am enjoying it. Don't you work too hard—and don't let the servants harry you. Post just going. Good-night!

Another week or fortnight—five weeks, or nearly, altogether! Doris was sorely wounded. She went to look at herself in the mirror over the chimney-piece. Was she not thin and haggard for want of rest and holiday? Would not the summer weather be all done by the time Arthur graciously condescended to come back to her? Were there not dark lines under her eyes, and was she not feeling a limp and wretched creature, unfit for any exertion? What was wrong with her? She hated her drawing; she hated everything. And there was Arthur, proposing to go yachting with Lady Dunstable, while Doris might toil and moil, all alone, in this August London! The tears rushed into her eyes. Her



The awkward pause following the recitation was suddenly broken by a loud and uncontrollable laugh. Doris, startled, upon her handsome face. The young man laughed on—laughed hysterically. Madame You insult me! You have done it before. And now be-



turned to look at young Dunstable. For it was he who had laughed. Madame also turned to look—a thunderous frown. Vavasour, all attitudes thrown aside, ran up to him in a fury. “Why are you laughing? fore strangers—it is too much! I insist that you explain!”

pride only just saved her from a childish fit of crying.

But in the end resentment came to her aid, together with an angry and redoubled curiosity as to what might be happening to Lady Dunstable's precious son while Lady Dunstable was thus absorbed in robbing other women of their husbands. Doris hurried her small household affairs, that she might get off early to the studio; and as she put on her hat, her fancy drew vindictive pictures of the scenes which any day might realize—the moment, for instance, at Franick Castle, when Lady Dunstable, unsuspecting, should open the letter which announced to her the advent of her daughter-in-law Elena, née Flink—or should gather the same unlovely fact from a casual newspaper paragraph. As for interfering between her and her rich deserts, Doris vowed to herself she would not lift a finger. That incredibly forgiving young woman, Miss Wigram, might do as she pleased. But when a mother pursues her own selfish ends so as to make her only son dislike and shun her, let her take what comes. It was in no mood of forgiveness that Doris made her way northwards to Campden Hill, and nobody perceiving the slight, erect figure in the corner of the 'bus could possibly have guessed at the storm within.

THE August day was hot and lifeless.

Heat-mist lay over the park, and over the gardens on the slopes of Campden Hill. Doris could hardly drag her weary feet along, as she walked from where the omnibus had set her down to her uncle's studio. But it was soon evident that within the studio itself there was animation enough. From the long passage approaching it, Doris heard some one shouting—declaiming—what appeared to be verse. She stopped outside the door, which was slightly open, to listen, and heard these astonishing lines, delivered very slowly and pompously, in a thick, strained voice:

My heart is adamant! The tear-drops  
drip and drip—  
Force their slow path, and tear their  
desperate way.

The Vulture Pain sits close, to snip—  
and snip—and snip

My sad sweet life to ruin—well-a-day!  
I am deceived—a bleating lamb be-  
reft, who goes

Baa—baa-ing to the moon o'er lonely  
lands.

Through all my shivering veins a tender  
fervor flows;

I cry to Love—"Reach out, my Lord,  
thy hands,

And save me from these ugly beasts  
who ramp and rage

Around me all day long—beasts fell  
and sore,

Envy and Hate and Calumny—do thou  
assuage

Their impious mouths, O Splendid  
Love, and floor

Their hideous tactics, and their noisome  
spleen,

Withering to dust the awful 'Might-  
Have-Been!'"

"Goodness! 'Howls the Sublime' and no mistake," thought Doris, gurgling with laughter in the passage. As soon as she had steadied her face, she opened the studio door, and perceived Lady Dunstable's prospective daughter-in-law standing in the middle of the studio, head thrown back and hands outstretched, invoking the Cyprian. The shriek of the first lines had died away in a stage whisper; the reciter was glaring fiercely into vacancy. On a chair beside her towered yet another hat, so large and audacious that it seemed to have a positive personality, a positive swagger of its own, and to be winking roguishly at the scanty audience.

Madame's muslin dress of the day before had been exchanged for—something more appropriate to the warmth of her poetry—a tawdry flame-colored satin in which her too solid frame was tightly sheathed. Her coal-black hair, tragically wild, looked as though no comb had been allowed near it for a month. A slovenly, disheveled, vulgar woman, reciting bombastic nonsense! And yet, a touch of Southern magnificence—even, of Southern grace—amid the cockney squalor and finery! Doris coolly recognized it, as she stood, herself invisible, behind her uncle's large easel. Thence she perceived also the other persons in the studio—Bentley sitting in front of the poetess, hiding his eyes with

one hand and nervously tapping the arm of his chair with the other; to the right of him,—seen sideways,—the lanky form, flushed face and open mouth of young Dunstable; and in the far distance, Miss Wigram.

THEN—a surprising thing! The awkward pause following the recitation was broken by a loud and uncontrollable laugh. Doris, startled, turned to look at young Dunstable. For it was he who had laughed. Madame also turned to look—a thunderous frown upon her handsome face. The young man laughed on—laughed hysterically. Madame Vavasour, all attitudes thrown aside, ran up to him in a fury.

"Why are you laughing? You insult me! You have done it before. And now before strangers—it is too much! I insist that you explain!"

She stood over him, her eyes blazing. The youth, still convulsed, did his best to quiet the paroxysm which had seized him and at last said, gasping:

"I was—I was thinking—of your reciting that at Crosby Ledgers—to my mother—and—and what she would say."

Even under her rouge, it could be seen that the poetess turned a gray white.

"And, pray—what would she say?"

The question was delivered with apparent calm. But Madame's eyes were dangerous. Doris stepped forward. Her uncle stayed her with a gesture. He himself rose, but Madame fiercely waved him aside. Miss Wigram in the distance had also moved forward a little—and paused.

"What would she say?" demanded Madame again—at the sword's point.

"I—I don't know," said young Dunstable helplessly, still shaking. "I think—she'd laugh!"

And he went off again, hysterically, trying to stop the fit in vain. Madame bit her lip. Then came a torrent of Italian, evidently a torrent of abuse; and then she lifted a gloved hand and struck the young man violently on the cheek.

"Take that! You insolent, you—you barbarian! You are my fiancé, my promised husband—and you mock at me! You will encourage your stuck-up

mother to mock at me; I know you will! But I tell you—"

The speaker, however, had stopped abruptly—and instead of saying anything more, she fell back panting, her eyes on the young man. For Herbert Dunstable had risen. At the blow, an amazing change had passed over his weak countenance and weedy frame. He put his hand to his forehead a moment, as though trying to collect his thoughts, and then he turned, quietly, to look for his hat and stick.

"Where are you going, Herbert?" stammered Madame. "I—I was carried away; I forgot myself."

"I think not," said the young man, who was extremely pale. "This is not the first time. I bid you good morning, Madame—and good-by!"

HE stood looking at the frightened woman, with a strange surprised look, like one just emerging from a semi-conscious state; and in that moment, as Doris seemed to perceive, the traditions of his birth and breeding had returned to him; something instinctive and inherited had reappeared; and the gentlemanly, easy-going father, who yet, as Doris remembered, when matters were serious "always got his way," was there—strangely there—in the flabby son.

"Where are you going?" repeated Madame, eyeing him. "You promised to take me to lunch."

"I regret—I have an engagement. Mr. Bentley, when the sitting is over, will you kindly see Miss Flink into a taxi? I thank you very much for allowing me to come and watch your work. I trust the picture will be a success. Good-by!"

He held out his hand to Bentley and bowed to Doris. Madame made a rush at him, but Bentley held her back. He seized her arms, indeed, quietly, but irresistibly, while the young man made his retreat. Then with a shriek Madame fell back on her chair, pretending to faint, and Bentley, in no hurry, went to her assistance.

DORIS slipped out after young Dunstable. She overtook him on the doorstep.



"Mr. Dunstable, may I speak to you?" she asked.

He turned in astonishment, showing a grim pallor which touched her pity.

"I know your mother and father," said Doris, hurriedly. "At least, my husband and I were staying at Crosby Ledgers some weeks ago—and my husband is now in Scotland with your people. His name is Arthur Meadows. I am Mrs. Meadows. I—I don't know whether I could help you. You seem"—her smile flashed out—"to be in a horrid mess!"

The young man looked in perplexity at the small, trim lady before him, as though realizing her existence for the first time. Her honest eyes were bent upon him with the same expression she had often worn when Arthur had come to her with some confession of folly—the expression which belongs to the maternal side of women, and is at once mocking and sweet. It said, "Of course you are a great fool—most men are. But that's the *raison d'être* of women! Suppose we go into the business!"

"You're very kind," he groaned, "awfully kind. I'm ashamed you should have seen—such a thing. Nobody can help me—thank you very much. I am engaged to that lady; I've promised to marry her. Oh, she's got any amount of evidence! I've been an idiot—and worse. But I can't get out of it. I don't mean to try to get out of it. I promised of my own free will. Only I've found out now I can never live with her. Her temper is fiendish. It degrades her—and me. But you saw! She has made my life a burden to me lately, because I wouldn't name a day for us to be married. I wanted to see my father quietly first,—without my mother knowing,—and I have been thinking how to manage it—andfunking it, of course; I always do funk things. But what she did just now has settled it—it has been blowing up for a long time. I shall marry her—at a registry office, as soon as possible. Then I shall separate from her and—I hope—never see her again. The lawyers will arrange that—and money. Thank you; it's awfully good of you to want to help me, but you can't—nobody can."

DORIS drew her companion into her uncle's small dining-room and closed the door. She listened to his burst of confidence with a puzzled concern.

"Why must you marry her?" she said abruptly when he paused. "Break it off! It would be far best."

"No. I promised. I,"—he stammered a little,—"*I* seem to have done her harm—her reputation, I mean. There is only one thing could let me off. She swore to me that—well—that she was a good woman, that there was nothing in her past—you understand—"

"And you know of nothing?" said Doris gravely.

"Nothing. And you don't think I'm going to try and ferret out things against her!" cried the youth, flushing. "No—I must just bear it."

"It's your parents that will have to bear it!"

His face hardened.

"My mother might have prevented it," he said bitterly. "However, I won't go into that. My father will see I couldn't do anything else. I'd better get it over. I'm going to my lawyers now. They'll take a few days over what I want."

"You'll tell your father?"

"I—I don't know," he said irresolutely. She noticed that he did not try to pledge her not to give him away. And she on her side did not threaten to do so. She argued with him a little more, trying to get at his real thoughts and to straighten them out for him. But it was evident he had made up such mind as he had, and that his sudden resolution—even the ugly scene which had made him take it—had been a relief. He knew at last where he stood.

So presently Doris let him go. They parted, liking each other decidedly. He thanked her warmly—though drearily—for taking an interest in him, and he said to her on the threshold:

"Some day, I hope—you'll come to Crosby Ledgers again, Mrs. Meadows; and I'll be there—for once. Then I'll tell you—if you care—more about it. Thanks awfully! Good-by."

LATER on, when "Miss Flink," in a state of sulky collapse, had been sent home in her taxi, Doris, Bentley





Doris walked slowly home across the park. A glory of splashing sun lay over the grassy glades; the water held reflections of a sky barred with rose. London transfigured and beautified seemed a city of pearl and fire.

and Miss Wigram held a conference. But it came to little. Bentley, the hater of "rows," simply could not be moved to take the thing up. "I kept her from scalping him,"—he laughed,—“and I'm not due for any more!”

Doris said little. A whirl of arguments and projects were in her mind. But she kept her own counsel about them. As to the possibility of inducing the man to break it off, she repeated the only condition on which it could be done—at which Uncle Charles laughed, and Alice Wigram fell into a long and thoughtful silence.

**D**ORIS arrived at home rather early.

What with the emotions of the day, the heat and her work, she was strangely tired and overdone. After tea, she strolled out into Kensington Gardens and sat under the shade of trees already autumnal, watching the multitude of children—children of the people—enjoying the nation's park all to themselves, in the complete absence of their social betters. What ducks they were, some of them—the little, grimy, round-faced things, rolling on the grass, or toddling after their sisters and brothers! They turned large, inquisitive eyes upon her, which seemed to tease her heart-strings.

And suddenly—it was in Kensington Gardens that out of the heart of a long and vague reverie there came a flash, an illumination, which wholly changed the life and future of Doris Meadows. She rose tottering to her feet and made

her way hurriedly northwards to a house in Lancaster Gate. In that house there lived a lady, a widowed lady, who was Doris' godmother and to whom Doris had turned before now, for the counsel that younger women ask of their elders. How long it was since she had seen her Cousin Julia—nearly two months! And here she was hurrying to her, and not able to bear the thought that in all human probability Cousin Julia was not in town.

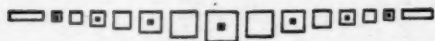
But by good luck Doris found her godmother, perching in town between a Devonshire visit and a Scotch one. They talked long, and Doris walked slowly home across the park. A glory of splashing sun lay over the grassy glades; the water held reflections of a sky barred with rose. London transfigured and beautified seemed a city of pearl and fire. And in Doris' heart there was a glory like that of the evening—and a promise of fair days to come. The glory and the promise stole through all her thoughts, softening and transmuting everything.

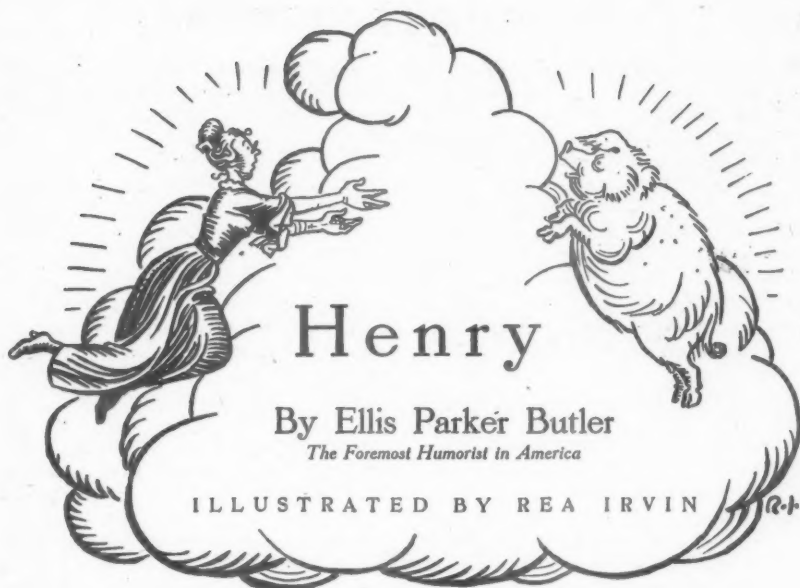
“When *he* grows up, if he were to marry such a woman—and I didn't know! If all his life, and mine, were spoiled—and nobody said a word!”

Her eyes filled with tears. She seemed to be walking with Arthur through a world of beauty, hand in hand.

How many hours to Pitlochry? She ran into the Kensington house, asking for railway guides and peremptorily telling Jane to get down the small suitcase from the box-room at once.

*This means, of course, that Doris has decided to take a hand. But what will be the result? What will be Lady Dunstable's reception of her offices? Follow Mrs. Ward's fascinating story in the August issue of the Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands July 23rd.*





*PHILO GUBB, the Correspondence School detective—graduate in twelve complete lessons of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting—confronts a problem in the transmigration of souls.*

**P**HILO GUBB (graduate of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting, Twelve Lessons, Diploma and Badge Ten Dollars Extra) entered his office—which was also his living-room and the headquarters of his paper-hanging and decorating operations—and placed on his cutting-table the express package he had found leaning against his door. With his trimming-knife he cut the cord that bound the package. It contained, he knew, the new disguise for which he had sent twenty-five dollars to the Rising Sun Supply Bureau, and he was eager to examine his purchase, which, in the catalogue, was known as "No. 34. French Count, with beard and wig complete. List, \$40.00. Special price to our graduates, \$25.00, express paid."

The paper-hanger-detective had lifted the exaggeratedly thin-waisted frock coat from the package when there came a tap on the door. He hastily covered the coat with the wrapping-paper and turned to the door.

"Enter in," he said. And the door opened cautiously and a short, ruddy-faced man entered, peering into the room first and then closing the door behind him as cautiously as he had opened it.

"Are you this here detective feller?" he asked bluntly.

"I am Mister P. Gubb, deteckating and paper-hanging done, to command at your service," admitted Mr. Gubb. "Wont you take a seat onto a chair?"

"Depends," said Mr. Gubb's visitor, keeping his hand on the doorknob. "I'll put it to you like this: Say some guy stole something from me, and I was willing to pay you for finding out who stole it and for getting it back—you'd take a job like that and say nothing about it to anybody, wouldn't you?"

"Most certainly sure," agreed Mr. Gubb. "I'm into business for that very exact purpose."

"That's the idee! You'd keep it dark. It wouldn't be nobody's business but yours and mine, would it? It would be a quiet little deal between you and me,

and nobody would know anything about it. Hey?"

"Exactly sure," said Philo Gubb. "The detectative business often has to be conducted onto an absolutely quiet Q. T. basis."

"Correct!" said his visitor. "I see you and me can do business. Now, my name is Gus P. Smith, and I've had one of the rawest deals handed me in this town a man ever had handed him. I was coming along down one of these alleys between streets this morning and—"

He stopped short and turned to the door. Some one had tapped on the panels. Mr. Smith opened the door the merest crack and peered out. He closed it again instantly.

"Somebody to see you," he whispered. "What I've got to say I want kept private. I'll be back."

He opened the door and slipped out, and as he went a second visitor entered. Mr. Gus P. Smith was a shortish man with close-cropped hair and a stubble of a beard. The newcomer was as different as one man could be from another. He was somewhat tall and thin, and his hair was long, so long it fell upon his shoulders in greasy curls. He wore a rather ancient frock coat and a black slouch hat, and a touch of style was added by his gray kid gloves, although the weather was average summer weather. His face was thin and adorned by a silky brown beard, divided at the chin and falling in two carefully arranged points. He closed the door carefully, first looking into the hall to see that Mr. Gus P. Smith had disappeared.

"Mr. P. Gubb, the detective?" he asked.

"Most absolutely sure," said Mr. Gubb.

"My name," said Mr. Gubb's visitor, "is one you are doubtless familiar with. I am Alibaba Singh."

"Pleased to meet your acquaintance," said Mr. Gubb. "What can I aim to do for you?"

Mr. Alibaba Singh brought a chair close to Mr. Gubb's desk and seated himself. He leaned close to Mr. Gubb—so close that Mr. Gubb scented the rank odor of cheap hair-oil—and whispered.

"Everything is to be strictly confidential—most strictly confidential. Relation of client to lawyer, and so forth. That's understood?"

"Most absolutely sure."

"Of course! Now, you must have heard of me—I've made quite a stir here in Riverbank since I came. Theosophical lectures—first lessons in Nirvana—Buddhistic philosophy—mysteries of Vedaism—et cetera."

"I read your advertisement notices into the newspapers," admitted Mr. Gubb.

"Just so. I have done well here. Many sought the mysteries. I have been unusually successful in Riverbank." He stopped short and looked at Philo Gubb suspiciously. "You don't believe in transmigration, do you?" he asked.

"Not without I do without knowing it," said Mr. Gubb. "What is it?"

"Transmigration," repeated Alibaba Singh. "It—Hindoos believe in it. The souls of the good enter higher forms of life; the souls of the bad enter lower forms of life. As if you were a bad man and when you died you would become a—a dog, or a horse, or—or something. You don't believe that, do you?"

"Most certainly not at all!" said Mr. Gubb.

"I—I teach it," said Alibaba Singh uneasily. "It is part of my teaching."

"You don't aim to believe nothing of that sort, do you?" asked Mr. Gubb as if he could not imagine any man so foolish.

"Now, that's it!" said Alibaba Singh. "That's why I came to you. All this is strictly confidential, of course? Thanks. I can speak right out, Mr. Gubb. I have in the past taught some things I did not absolutely believe."

"Quite likely true," admitted Philo Gubb.

"We—we occultists get carried on by our eloquence," said Alibaba Singh. "We—we go too far sometimes. Far too far! I admit it; I admit that frankly. When our clients reach out to us for more and more, we—we sometimes go too far. I won't say we string them along. I wouldn't say that. But we—we lead them farther than we have gone

ourselves, perhaps. You understand?"

"Almost absolutely," said Mr. Gubb.

"Just so! Mr. Gubb, one of my clients was greatly interested in transmigration of souls—greatly interested. She was interested in all things mystical—in reincarnation; in the return of the spirits of the dead; in everything like that. I—really, Mr. Gubb, it was hard for me to keep up with her."

"And you proceeded to go ahead and teach her about this transmigration of souls that you don't believe into yourself," said Mr. Gubb helpfully. "And when she found out you was a faker she set out to sue you for her money back."

"No. Not that!" said Alibaba Singh energetically. "That's not it. She doesn't want her money back."

She—she's *almost* satisfied.

She's willing to accept what had happened philosophically. She's almost content. Mr.

Gubb, the reason I came to you was that I did not want her to land in—"

Alibaba Singh looked carefully around.

"I don't want her to land in jail," he whispered. "It would make trouble for me. The lady, Mr. Gubb, is Mrs. Henry K. Lippett."

"Well?" queried Mr. Gubb.

"What I don't know," said Alibaba Singh, wiping his brow nervously, "is whether I *did* reincarnate her late husband or whether she's liable to be arrested for stealing a—"

Alibaba Singh stopped short and arose hastily. Some one had knocked on Mr. Gubb's door. Alibaba Singh moved toward the door.

"I don't want to talk about this with anybody around," he said nervously. "I'll come back later. Not a word about it!"

He brushed past Mr. Gubb's new visitor as he went out, and Mr. Gubb arose to greet the newcomer.

This third visitor was a large, red-

faced man with an extremely loud vest. He wore a high hat of gray beaver, and a large but questionable diamond sparkled on his finger. He walked directly up to Mr. Gubb and shook hands.

"Sit down," he commanded. "Now, you're Gubb, the detective, aint you? Good enough! My name is Stephen Watts, but they mostly call me Steve for short—Four-finger Steve," he added, holding up his right hand to show that one finger was missing. "I'm in the show business—in the show business, and in dead wrong right now. Ever hear of Hogo, the Educated Horse? Ever hear of Hogo, the Human Trilobite? Ever hear of Henry, the Educated Pig?"

Well, them are me! That's my show. Everybody's heard of them—of me. Did you ever hear of a sheriff?"

"Frequently often," said Mr. Gubb with a smile.

"Well, up to Derlingport this here Human Trilobite of mine wandered loose from my side-show tent. You know whata Human Trilobite is—eats

stone like a kid eats cake. Well, this Hogo feller broke away and wandered down Main Street, and when they found him he had eat about half of the marble cornerstone out from under the Dawkins Building. He's crazy after white

marble. It's like candy to him. But it's bad for his digestion, and I'd been keepin' him on a diet of good, solid bluestone for a couple of weeks, and when he runs across that cornerstone he just bit into it and gobbled it up. So Dawkins attaches my show and sends the sheriff with an execution to grab the whole business unless I pay for a new cornerstone. Said it would cost two hundred and fifty dollars. I didn't have the money."

"So he took the show," said Philo Gubb.



"My name is one you are doubtless familiar with. I am Alibaba Singh."



"*Ex-act-ly!*" said Mr. Four-finger Steve. "He grabbed the whole caboodle. *Ex-cept* Henry, the Educated Pig. That's why I'm here. That sheriff's attachment is out against that pig; it is a felony to remove that pig from Derling County while that attachment is out against it. *And* the pig has been removed."

"You removed it away from there?" asked Philo Gubb.

"Listen," said Four-finger Steve. "All this is strictly confidential, aint it? Good. I can speak right out to you, like I could to my doctor? Good. No, I didn't remove that pig from Derling County. It was stole from me. Just after that sheriff attached the whole show and while he was fussing around, somebody stole that pig out of the tent, and I know who stole it. Greasy Gus stole it. Augustus P. Smith, my bally-hoo man stole Henry, the Educated Pig, and made a get-away with him. See? See what I'm up against? See what I want?"

"Not positively exact," said Philo Gubb.

"Well, it's a little bit delicate," said Four-finger Steve, "and that's why I come to you instead of to the police. I want that pig. If I can get that pig and get out of this State somewhere where they don't know about that attachment up in Derling County, I can go ahead with the show business in a sort of way. I can rent room in an empty store in any town and show the Educated Pig and get along. But if I go to the police and they find the pig they'll send it back to the sheriff in Derling County. See? So you can just forget about that sheriff and consider that pig as mine, and find it for me, and return it to me, and if you do I've got a twenty-dollar bill for you right here."

"Do you want I should arrest Greasy Augustus P. Smith?" asked Philo Gubb.

"Not on your life!" said Four-finger vigorously. "No arrests! I don't want a thing that will set that sheriff on my track. You just get the pig."

"How big is the size of the pig?" asked Philo Gubb.

"It's a big pig," said Mr. Watts. "Henry has been getting almost too fat,

and that's a fact. I've been thinking right along I'd have to diet Henry, but I never got to it. He's one of these big, double-chinned pinkish-white pigs—looks like a prize pig in a county fair. And listen! He's in this town!"

"Really indeed?" said Mr. Gubb.

"I know it!" said Four-finger Steve. "I seen Greasy Gus load that pig into a farm wagon at Derlingport, and I thought nothing of it. I thought Gus was trying to salvage the pig for me, like one feller will help out another in time of trouble. So I come down to Riverbank on the train, expecting Gus would show up at the hotel and tell me where the pig was hid. All right! Gus shows up. 'Gus,' I says, 'where's Henry?' Gus lets on to be worried. 'Stolen!' he says. 'Some guy lifted him when I wasn't looking.' Of course I knew that was a lie, and I told him so. I was red-hot. So he got mad too. 'Now,' he says, 'you'll never get Henry back. I meant to give him back to you, but after you have talked to me like that I'll never give him back. I'll keep him,' he says, 'if I can find him, and before I'd give him back to you I'll give him to the sheriff of Derling County.' So there you are, Mr. Gubb. Henry is in Riverbank, and I want Henry. This story about Henry being stolen is a lie. Henry is hid, and Gus Smith knows where."

Mr. Gubb looked at Mr. Watts thoughtfully.

"Now, if you're one of these fellers with a conscience," said Four-finger, "you can do what you want with Henry after you find him. If you feel that way, you can send Henry back to the sheriff. I guess I can raise enough to redeem Henry and let the horse and my tent outfit go. But I won't have Greasy Gus putting a trick like this over on me! No, sir! All I got to say is, you find Henry and you get this twenty-dollar bill. I'll be down at the Riverbank Hotel. That's all!"

He arose and shook hands with Mr. Gubb again and went out. It was fully fifteen minutes before Mr. Gus P. Smith, who must have been waiting across the street, came in. He closed the door and locked it.

"I saw old Four-finger come out of



this building," he said. "What did he want?"

"He came upon confidential business which can't be mentioned," said Mr. Gubb.

"Just so!" said Mr. Smith. "He wanted you to find Henry, the Educated Pig. You don't need to tell me. I know! All right, I've no objections. After what Four-finger Watts called me I don't care what he does. I suppose he told you what the sheriff did up at Derlingport and that I stole Henry?"

Mr. Gubb said nothing.

"That's all right. You're white. You won't give it away, but that's what he was here about, and I know it. Now, listen to me. I skipped out with that pig to do Four-finger a favor and save part of his show for him, and that's the truth, but he don't believe it—not him! He called me a thief and worse, he did. He had the nerve to say I wanted that pig myself, to start in business with, and that's a lie. No man can insult me like that, Mr. Gubb. Look at this—"

He took from his pocket a couple of feet of whipcord and handed it to Philo Gubb.

"What is this?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"That's all that's left of Henry," said Greasy Gus. "That's his total remains up to date. That's the rope I led Henry with after I quit the wagon of a farmer that rode us out of Derlingport. That cord was tied to Henry's left hind foot. Look at the end without the knot—was that cut or wasn't it?"

"I most generally reserve my opinion until later than right at first," said Philo Gubb.

"All right, reserve it!" said Greasy Gus. "Looks to me like it was cut. No matter. I want you to find Henry. When I come in here first, awhile ago, I was so mad I had made up my mind to take Henry and get away with him if you could find him, but now I don't care what happens to him just so Four-finger don't get him. Send him back to the sheriff of Derling County if you want to. The main thing I want is for you to find Henry and not let Four-finger Steve Watts get him. How's that?"

"Under them certain specifications,"

said Philo Gubb, "I can take up the case and get right to work onto it."

"All right, then," said Greasy Gus. "Now, here's what I know about it. I got out of Derlingport with Henry, and when the farmer dumped us from his wagon I hitched this whipcord to Henry's leg and drove him along the road. After while I hit this town of Riverbank. It wasn't no right way for a swell, high-toned pig like Henry to enter a town, but it was the only way I could manage. I thought maybe the police would be looking out for Henry. So I took to an alley instead of a regular street, and along we came. We came along down the alley, and of a sudden I began to wonder what I'd do with Henry now I'd got him into town. It would look kind of suspicious for me and Henry to go to a hotel like that. 'I know what I'll do,' I says to myself: 'I'll rent him a stall in somebody's barn for a day or two.' That was the natural thing to do, wasn't it? So then I thought, 'How'll I look going along with Henry and asking if I can put him in this barn and that barn? It'll look suspicious. What I want to do is to go alone to rent a barn and say I'm thinking of buying a pig if I can get a place to keep him.' So that's what I did."

"You left the pig alone in the alley by itself?" asked Philo Gubb.

"Yes, sir!" said Mr. Smith. "I found an alley fence that had a staple in it, and I tied one end of the whipcord to the staple and went down the alley to find a barn I could put Henry in. About the fifth barn I tried I found a place for Henry, and then I went back to get him, and he was gone!"

"And no clue left onto the place?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"This tag end of the rope," said Greasy Gus. "That was all. At first I thought Henry had pulled loose, rope and all, and had wandered away, and I ran up and down the alley and across the big vacant field that was there, and down one street and up another, but I couldn't see anything of him. Then I went back and found this tag end of rope. And that's all I know about where Henry went, but my idee is somebody come along and seen him there and just

thought he'd have a pig cheap. If the houses along there looked like the sort that would have pig-stealers in them I'd suspect somebody in those houses, but they aint that kind. I snooped into the back yards of some of them."

"It's a pretty hard case to work onto," said Mr. Gubb doubtfully. "Somebody might have come along with a wagon and loaded him in."

"Sure!" said Mr. Smith. "No telling at all. That's why I come to you. If he was where I could fall over him, I wouldn't need a detective, would I? Now, you go up and look over the ground, and you ought to be able to find a clue where I couldn't. That's your business. I can tell you right where to go. The alley opens out into a sort of big field there toward the north. There's a big water reservoir in the field. The fence is back of a big white house with a gable roof, and there's a silver poplar in the back yard. And if you find Henry I'll just give you these four five-dollar bills. I'm no millionaire, but I'll blow that much for the satisfaction of getting back at Four-finger Watts. Is it a go?"

"Under them certain specifications," said Mr. Gubb, using the exact words he had used before, "I can take up the case and get right to work onto it." Mr. Smith shook hands to bind the bargain and departed.

He had hardly disappeared before Mr. Alibaba Singh opened the door cautiously, put his head inside and then entered.

"I thought that man would stay forever," he said with annoyance. "He isn't in any way interested in my affairs or in the affairs of Mrs. Henry K. Lippett, is he?"

"Nobody has been here that is interested into anything you are interested into in the slightest form or manner," Mr. Gubb assured him, and Alibaba Singh sighed with relief.

"You never knew Henry K. Lippett, did you?" he asked.

"Never at all," said Mr. Gubb.

"He broke his neck," said Alibaba Singh, "and it killed him."

He hesitated and seemed lost in thought. He drew himself together sharply.

"It isn't *possible*!" he exclaimed with irritation and with no connection with what he had just said. "I *don't* believe it! I—I—"

His distress was great. He wrung one hand inside the other. He almost wept.

"Mr. Gubb," he said, "since I was here I have been up to Mrs. Lippett's house again, and it is worse than ever. It couldn't be possible! I haven't the power. I know I haven't the power."

"You'd ought to try to explain yourself more plain to your deteckative," said Mr. Gubb.

"I'll tell you everything!" said Alibaba Singh in a sudden burst of confidence. "Mr. Gubb, I am an impostor. I am a fraud. I am not a Hindoo. I was born in Delancy Street, New York. My name is Guffins, James Guffins. I did sleight-of-hand stuff in a Bowery show. I took up this mystic, yogi, Hindoo stuff because I thought it would pay and it was easy to fool the dames. They fell for it easily enough, and I made good money. But I'm no yogi. I'm no miracle man. I couldn't bring a man back to life in his own form or any other form, could I?"

"Undoubtedly hardly so," said Mr. Gubb.

"Glad to hear you say it," said Mr. Guffins with relief. "A man gets so interested in his work—and there is a lot you can learn in books about this Hindoo mumbo-jumbo business—but of course I couldn't bring Mr. Lippett back. I'm no spiritualistic medium. I couldn't materialize the spirit of a pig."

As he said the word, Mr. Guffins shuddered. It had come out unintentionally, but it seemed to jar him to the depth of his being. He had evidently not meant to say *pig*.

"Mr. Gubb, I will be frank with you. I need your help," he continued. "Mrs. Lippett attended my lecture, and she became interested. She formed a class to study yogi philosophy. We went deep into it. I had to read up one week what I taught them the next. The lights turned low and my Hindoo costume helped, of course. Air of mystery, strange perfumes, and all that. You said you never knew Henry K. Lippett?"



"She thinks it's Henry. She's fixed up the guest bedroom for him."

"Never at all," said Mr. Gubb.

"Fat man," said Mr. Guffins. "He must have been a very fat man. And a hearty eater. Rather — rather an over-hearty eater. He must have lived to eat."

Mr. Guffins sighed again.

"Of course there was remuneration," Mr. Guffins went on. "For me, I mean.

To pay for my time. Mrs. Lippett was most generous. I *told* her," he said angrily, "I couldn't guarantee to materialize her dead husband. I said to her: 'Mrs. Lippett, we had better not try it. My power may be too weak. And think of the risk. He *may* be pure spirit, floating in Nirvana, and come to us as a pure spirit, or he *may* have

passed into the next circle and be something purer than a mortal, but what if his life was not all it should have been on earth? What if his spirit has passed into a lower form as a punishment for misdeeds? You will pardon me for speaking so of him, but men are weak," I said, "and he may now be a— a bird of the air. It would be a shock," I said, "to see him changed into a bird of the air."

Mr. Guffins paused and wiped his forehead.

"But she would have it," he went on. "She would have me make the attempt. So—"

Mr. Guffins looked at Mr. Gubb appealingly.

"You *don't* believe I could do it, do you?" he pleaded.

"Not in any manner of means," said Mr. Gubb.

"That's what I want you to prove to her," said Mr. Guffins. "That's why I came to you. Everybody knows you are a detective. It's your business to hunt up murderers and thieves and— and frauds, and to arrest them. I want you to—to get on my trail."

"You want me to arrest you!" cried Mr. Gubb with surprise.

"I want you to be looking for me as if you wanted to arrest me," said poor Mr. Guffins; "as if you had received word that I was a fraud, and that you were hunting for me and had traced me to Mrs. Lippett's. You can go there and say: 'Gone! I am too late! He has escaped.' And then you can tell her it couldn't be."

"That what couldn't be?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"The room was darkish," said Mr. Guffins. "The lights were dim. I stood in the light of the red globe, and it gave me a weird look. I held the crystal globe in one hand and the jade talisman in the other. The incense arose from the incense-burner. As if out of the empty air, a sweet-toned bell rang three times. I bowed low three times as the bell rang and muttered the magic words. I made them up as I said them, but they sounded mystic. Mrs. Lippett was sitting on the edge of her chair, breathless with emotion. The curtains were drawn across

the door at the back of the room. You could have heard a pin drop. We were alone, just we two. I felt creepy myself. I turned toward the curtains. I said, 'Henry, appear!'"

"Yes?" queried Philo Gubb.

Mr. Guffins threw out both hands with a gesture of utter despair.

"A pig came under the curtains!" he groaned. "A pig—a great, fat, double-chinned, pinky-white pig, the kind you see at county fairs—came under the curtains and grunted twice. It stood there and raised its head and grunted twice."

Mr. Guffins wrung his hands nervously.

"It—it surprised me," he said, "—but only for a minute. I said, 'Get out, you beast!' and was going to kick it, but Mrs. Lippett rose slowly from her chair. She half-tottered for an instant, and then she covered her face with her hands. She began to weep. 'I knew it!' she sobbed; 'I knew it! Oh, Henry, I knew you ate too much. I told you and *told* you again and again you were making a pig of yourself, and now—' She turned to me rather fiercely," said Mr. Guffins, "and spoke in an excited whisper. 'Not a word of this must be known outside!' she whispered tensely. 'For Henry's sake and for my sake, it must never be known that his spirit transmigrated into a pig. Go, now!' she said. 'I don't blame you. You warned me. I will care for him lovingly. I will still be his loving wife. I will try to help him to live so that in his next incarnation he may rise into the body of a higher form of life. Oh, Henry, if you had only been less of a pig when you were alive before!' And what do you think that pig did?"

"What did it do?" asked Philo Gubb.

"It sat up on its hind legs and begged," said Mr. Guffins, "begged for food. It was a painful sight. Mrs. Lippett couldn't stand it. She wept. 'He was always so hungry in his other life,' she said. 'I can't begin to be harsh with him yet. To-morrow, but not when he has just come back to me. Come, Henry!'"

"She went into the dining-room," continued Mr. Guffins, "and Henry—or the pig, for it *couldn't* have been Henry—

followed her. And what do you think it did?"

"What?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"It went right to the dining-room table and climbed into a chair. Pigs don't do that, do they? But you don't believe it could have been Henry, do you? It got up in the chair and sat in it, and put its front feet on the table and grunted. And Mrs. Lippett hurried about saying 'Oh, Henry! Oh, poor, dear Henry!' and brought a plate of fried hominy and sliced apple and set it before him. And he wouldn't touch it! He wouldn't eat. So Mrs. Lippett wept harder and got a napkin and tied it around the pig's neck. Then the pig ate. He almost climbed into the plate, and gobbled the food down. And then he grunted for more. And Mrs. Lippett wept and said: 'It's Henry! He always did tie a napkin around his neck—he spilled his soup so. It's Henry! It acts just like Henry. He never did anything at the table but eat and grunt.' And so," said Mr. Guffins sadly, "she thinks it's Henry. She's fixed up the guest bedroom for him."

"The idea of such a notion!" said Mr. Gubb.

"Well, that's it," said Mr. Guffins sadly. "What can I do? I can't go and say I'm a fraud. How could I make her believe that pig wasn't Henry? She knows there's a law against having pigs in Riverbank. How can I explain how a pig, just at that moment, came in from the country and came under the curtains? Do you know, that pig walks on its hind feet like a man? She says it walks like Henry. . . . Oh!"

"What is it?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"I told you Henry—"

"Yes?"

"I told you Henry broke his neck. He fell down and broke his neck, in his store. He was coming down the back stairs in the dark, and his foot caught in a piece of rope and he fell. And—

this pig came into the parlor with a piece of string on its leg. Here's the string."

Mr. Gubb took it. From his desk he took the string Mr. Greasy Gus had left. The two ends joined perfectly.

"I'll get you out of this fix, and fix it so Mrs. Lippett wont have that pig onto her hands," he said. "I'll go tell her what a fraud of a faker you are, and it wont cost you but twenty-five dollars."

"Willingly paid," said Mr. Guffins, reaching into his pocket.

"And don't worry about that pig being Henry K. Lippett," said Mr. Gubb. "That pig was a stranger into Riverbank. And," he went on, as if reading the

words from the end of the whipcord, "it was tied to the alley fence. Tied to an iron staple," he said, "by a short, stoutish man with a ruddish face." He took up the other piece of cord and looked at it closely. "And the pig jerked the cord in two and went into the yard and in at the open door and into the room. And what is moreover also, the pig is an educated show-pig, and its name is Henry, and—"

"And what?" asked Mr. Guffins eagerly.

"If you want to get rid of the pig out of Mrs. Lippett's house, all you have to do is to write to the sheriff of Derling County, Derlingport, Iowa, and you needn't trouble yourself into it no further."

"Great Scott!" cried Mr. Guffins. "And you can tell all that from that piece of cord? Why, I always thought those *Sherlock Holmes* tales were fakes!"

Mr. Gubb smiled a superior smile.

"Us gents that is into the deteckative business," he said carelessly, "has to learn twelve correspondence lessons before we get our diplomas. And over two pages of Lesson Nine is given over to 'The Inductive or *Sherlock Holmes* Method.' The deteckative mind is educated up to such things."



# R o m a n c e

*A plot that would have delighted O. Henry, told by that young writer who is the latest of the Red Book "discoveries."*

By Ray Sprigle

Author of "The Escape of Bill Newlands."

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK B. HOFFMAN

**H**ARRIS CONWELL was a good son. Everyone in Hayesville, Ohio, said that. He was twenty-eight years old, a full-fledged lawyer, entitled to practice at the bar of his State; a university man, of course, and a personable six feet of manhood. But all of these things were overshadowed in the collective mind of Hayesville, so that Conwell was regarded merely as a good son. His sonship was the big thing in Conwell's life.

Conwell's mother had been an invalid for eight years—since Conwell's father died. Before that, for twenty years, she had imagined herself an invalid and her husband had taken care of her. Her husband's death marked the beginning of the end of the health she always had denied, and her son took up the burden of caring for her.

Not that he ever admitted it was a burden. Mrs. Conwell was little and appealing. She had been appealing all her life. And always there had been some one to respond to her appeals—her parents, her husband, and now her son.

Young Conwell began his care of his mother where his father laid it down. The lad had two years of the university to finish. He matriculated at a Cleveland institution, and for the final two years traveled the thirty miles to and from his classes, morning and night, that he might be with his mother.

After graduation he surrendered all his own ambitions and ideals and became a sort of combination son, "hired girl," maid and paid companion. To be sure, he maintained "chambers" in

one of the two office buildings of which the town boasted. Here he had a desk and a bookcase filled with the tomes. Now and then he had a client—but rarely: for Hayesville, to repeat, regarded him as a good son and not as an attorney.

His mother's daily outing in her chair, when the weather favored her, or the afternoon spent in the big front room while Conwell read to her, were the big events in her life. And insensibly they became the big events in Conwell's life too—but only of the life that he lived in Hayesville.

For Conwell was leading a double life. One was his life in Hayesville, dull, uneventful, each day growing more dull and more uneventful. But the other was pure adventure, a life of thrills, of hairbreadth escapes, of maidens in distress, of fights to the death, of strange seas and hidden lands. In this life Conwell trod the checkered rose-path of Romance.

He was a dreamer, this Hayesville youth, this country lawyer, and this other life was built of the fabric of dreams. The villagers thought him dull, not over witty, but he moved for days at a time, lost in adventure of his own dreaming.

Now his dreams carried him to the frozen North, with its wastes of ice, its strong men and hardy—and fearless and lawless, too. And now they took him to strange, far places—forest and desert and plain. But oftenest they took him to that fairyland of color and poetry and romance, the South Seas.



Give his brain but a fragment, just a bit of coral, a stretch of sandy beach, a palm tree; straightway that dreaming brain would transform the bit of coral to long rows of shark-toothed reefs where the blue of the sea turned to the white of breakers, where a pilot dared loss of ship and life for every inch he turned the wheel; the bit of beach became an island, and the palm tree became a forest to cover it. Then he

peopled his island of dreams with strange dream-people—strange to the world that is, but every one of them a friend or an enemy to him.

At first there was always hope in Conwell's breast that some day he might *live* Romance. But as the years came and went, and each saw him still in Hayesville, the hope grew dimmer.

And then his mother died. She passed away one afternoon as he was reading to her.

TWO months afterward Harris Conwell, barrister, of Hayesville, Ohio, disappeared. In his stead appeared Harry Conwell, wanderer on the highway of adventure. Harry Conwell shipped on the *Frank E. Beecham*, a freighter bound from San Francisco for



His dreams took him to that fairy land of poetry and color and romance, the South Seas

South Pacific ports. Conwell shipped as a coal-passer, his broad shoulders and sturdy frame getting him the job despite his soft hands. Coal-passers were scarce.

The first night out, Conwell took his turn in the fireroom. It was back-breaking work. He wondered if he would die, after an hour of it in the stokehole. In two hours he hoped he would die—soon. If he were dead, he could rest, anyway.

But, somehow, mechanically, he kept

his paralyzed arms and back moving. Somehow he kept his fires sprayed with lumps of coal. Sweat ran into his eyes and blinded him. He was unfamiliar with the tricks of the stoker, and so burned himself cruelly when he opened the fire-doors. The front of his hair, his eyebrows and finally his lashes crinkled, curled and dropped off when he brushed a grimy hand over them.

He dropped in the coal-bunkers when word came, after four hours, to knock off. His relief had to sound a tattoo on his ribs with his foot before Conwell staggered to his bunk and—dressed, booted, unwas he d—plunged into the blankets.

In four hours—it seemed he had hardly closed his eyes—came the call to go on duty again. If he hoped for death in the first four hours, in the second turn his wish had been granted and he was undergoing eternal punishment for his sins. This time, when he had finished, one of his mates led him to the grating on one of the lower decks, where he was sluiced off with buckets of icy seawater. Then he slept twelve hours.

Stiffened muscles and blistered hands tortured him next day. He eased the hands a bit by tearing strips from his coat and wrapping them about the torn palms. But there was no easing the creaking tendons of back and arms.

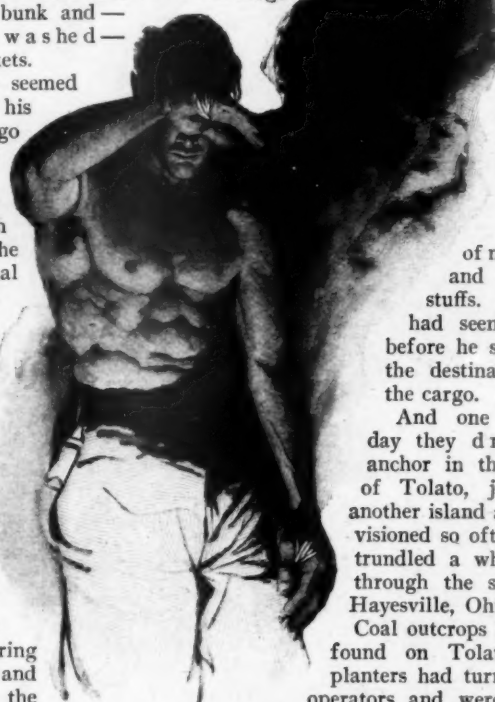
In a week he became hardened to it.

"Yuh c'u'd git ust tuh bein' hanged if it wasn't fer shuttin' off yer wind, Conwell," the man on the station next to his explained facetiously.

Conwell came out of it hard, muscle-bound to be sure, but feeling the strength pulsing through his arteries as he trod the fire-deck or skylarked in the bunkroom. It was work to the

others: so many hours, so many shovel-fuls of coal, for so much per month. To Conwell it was Romance. And you spelled it with a capital *R* and said it with reverence.

AT Honolulu they put in long enough to drop sugar-mill machinery—and take on additional supplies and cargo. They were bound for the South Pacific with a heterogeneous cargo



Sweat ran  
into his  
eyes and  
blinded  
him.

of machinery and food-stuffs. Conwell had seen to that before he shipped—the destination, not the cargo.

And one glorious day they dropped anchor in the harbor of Tolato, just such another island as he had visioned so often, as he trundled a wheel-chair through the streets of Hayesville, Ohio.

Coal outcrops had been found on Tolato, and planters had turned coal-operators and were dreaming dreams of a great coal-producing center. There were camps of coolies up from the beach. The old town lay sleepily in the sunshine and blinked at the newcomers rushing to and fro.

The ship lay over a week, and the stokers, except for a squad that kept steam up to run the derricks and dynamos, had nothing to do. Conwell moved through the pages of a book, countless books. Every red-nosed beach-comber was a *Bully Hayes* to him.

Every stately native, down from the plantations for squareface and a week in town, was a native ruler, plotting a Polynesian empire in the South Seas. Others might observe that the native women were dark, very dark, and that they seemed to run to excess *avoiropois* and children—but not Conwell.

It was the last night of Conwell's stay. He was to sail at midnight. He was idling along the beach drinking in the white, tropical moonlight. He had passed the tumble-down warehouses that fronted the town, and had reached the palms that skirted the sand.

A woman screamed. As Conwell plunged across the sand and among the trees, he saw a short, thick figure roll off the veranda of a bungalow nestled among the tree-trunks and fade into the gloom. He pursued a few paces, but the man slipped into a pathway through the brush and the sound of his footsteps died. Back to the little house rushed Conwell, up the steps to the veranda.

There, framed in the doorway, stood a girl. A thin, sweeping gown modeled her figure in the lamplight that streamed past her. Tall she was, erect, stately, blue-black hair, great starry eyes, olive skin, full red lips. Conwell stood like a worshiper, and then:

"Has he hurt you? I tried to catch the brute—"

The classic face underwent a curious transformation. The perfect red lips flattened into a line—a long line, too. The rounded, dimpled chin seemed to drop as on hinges.

She was laughing—shrill, raucous, cackling laughter.

"Him hurt?—me?" She said it scornfully and haltingly.

"White marster belong along me—hoosban. Try beat me an' I"—she searched for a word—"bounce he haid."

One of the perfect arms swung forward a work-roughened hand. In the hand was—an empty beer-bottle with a familiar St. Louis label.

Conwell stumbled off the porch without a word.

THE *Frank E. Beecham* steamed northward day by day and finally lay off Shanghai. Shanghai—there was

Romance even in the name: Shanghai of stories; Shanghai of the Orient; Shanghai of all that was strange and mysterious and foreign to the Occident.

And the day after the arrival of the *Frank E. Beecham* the perfectly sedate British policeman began to be annoyed by a broad-shouldered American who persisted in scouting through all the noisome alleyways of the Chinese section. They learned he was a stoker. His hands were the hands of a stoker, to be sure, and so was his frame. But his face was the face of an idealist, one who leads forlorn hopes.

It was Conwell, hot on the trail of Romance.

The hunt led him to a little place in the Chinese quarter. It would have puzzled one to give the establishment a name. Food was served, so it might have been called a restaurant, but restaurants seldom deal in the innocent-seeming but equilibrium-dispelling wine of the rice. Nor can one purchase small lead-foil packets of opium, or play strange games of chance of the Orient, in which one may lose one's embroidered coat or one's fairest and youngest slave-girl.

All these things, and more, could one do, if one be Chinese, in Ong Low's, where Conwell grasped for Romance and seized Trouble.

In the first place, Conwell wasn't wanted there. But since he had entered and demanded food, and probably would pay eight times the regular price without demur, he was served.

In the second place, being there, he should have known enough to eat what was set before him, pay what was demanded—and get out. But not Conwell. In the heavy pair of curtains that veiled the rear he read mystery. In the five Chinese squatted near the curtains he saw the crew of a pirate junk. In their clacking speech he read sinister Oriental plots.

And then, for an instant, in the rift of the curtains, he saw a face. It was a white man's face, a youth's face, drawn and wan and tortured. And had not Conwell heard of Chinese slavery, where a white man might be lost forever in the evil dens of a hidden Cathay?

In Hayesville, Ohio, they had heard of these things.

Conwell rose and started for the curtains. He had to pass the Chinese. One of them saw him coming and read belligerency in his face and actions. With a word to his companions, he rose. All he intended was to get away. He was a man of peace, a coolie waiting for a job,—as were his companions, — which Ong Low, in his capacity of employment agent, might furnish him.

Conwell hit the first man. Also he hit the next one to rise. Now, even a peaceable Chinese coolie will resent it if he is smitten by a mad barbarian devil and knocked galley west. The five closed in on Conwell. Here the adventurer made another tactical error. He drew the revolver that he had saved against the time of need that now seemed upon him. He had bought it in Sim Hardwick's hardware store in Hayesville, Ohio. One of the Chinese leaped past him and fled with shrill cries.

Conwell was holding four frozen Chinese as still as statues, and desperately wondering what to do next, when he heard behind him solid, capable footsteps. He turned his head just as a heavy hand fell on his shoulder.

"I say now, you're under arrest. This wont do at all." Another hand grasped his other shoulder, and Conwell was turned about and marched straight to a very modern jail by two very modern policemen. Conwell excitedly tried to explain about the slave in the rear, but the only response was when one of his captors turned to the other with a smile



"Him hurt?—me?" She said it scornfully and haltingly.

that was pity, admiration and envy.

"Gorry, aint 'e got a beauty?" he remarked. And his companion agreed that "e" had.

Conwell spent the night in a cell. In the morning he faced a dignified judge. The four Chinese were there and gave their evidence through an interpreter. Conwell told his tale too. Court and spectators all were impassive. Ong Low

was called. He wore a mandarin's coat of silk and an American collar and tie. He testified in clipped but intelligible English.

"Yes. There was a white man in the rear room. ....

"I feed and clothe him, and he sleeps on the floor. He writes a few letters for me when he has not smoked too much.

"Yes, opium."

Conwell saw the light.

Ong Low told the court neither he nor his place had been damaged and suggested deferentially that Conwell be not severely punished. The second engineer of the *Frank E. Beecham* was there too and pleaded for his stoker. So Conwell escaped with a fine instead of the six months in jail which ordinarily would have been his.

As they left the courtroom, Conwell found Ong Low beside him and turned to thank the Oriental.

"What part of America do you come from?" asked the Chinaman.

"Ah," was the pleased response to Conwell's answer, "that is near my old home. I guess I could almost call myself an American. I owned a restaurant in Pittsburgh for ten years before I came here five years ago."

He had been in Cleveland too, and Conwell couldn't get rid of him until he stepped into a boat at the quay that was to take him to the *Frank E. Beecham* out in the harbor. In that ten-minute walk Ong Low extracted from Conwell everything that he knew about Cleveland or had heard about Pittsburgh. The Chinaman seemed homesick.

**STRAIGHT** from Shanghai to San Francisco sped the freighter. There Conwell expected to lay over while his ship took on cargo again, and then "ship over." But at the offices of the company he found letters and telegrams which called him to Hayesville. He had left no power of attorney, and a dozen petty things awaited his attention. He started home, intent on putting his affairs in such shape that he could shake the dust of Hayesville forever from his feet.

On that trip across the continent he shaped the experiences of the past two

months in his mind. And when he had finished, he had Romance, Romance pure and unadulterated.

He remembered the beach and the palms and the moonlight of Tolato; he forgot the squalor and dirt and the construction-camps. He remembered the picture the woman made as she stood in the doorway, the starry eyes, the wonderful skin and hair and lips; he forgot the laugh and the beer-bottle. He remembered the face behind the curtains in Shanghai and the fight in the den; he forgot the courtroom and the fine he paid. He remembered Ong Low's mandarin coat and forgot his American collar and tie.

Hayesville scarce had missed him.

"How are ye, Harris? Bin away, aint you?" was all the greeting it gave him on his return.

The business that had called him home dragged. There were transfers of bonds. There was the sale of several farms to look after, besides matters of taxes and repairs. But at last he was ready to go again, ready to take the open highway once more.

**AND** then Conwell met the girl. His hunger after Romance did one thing for him: it made him recognize *the* girl instantly.

Harris saw her on the one street of Hayesville one afternoon. Two minutes afterward he knew who she was and knew all the village could tell about her.

She was Conchita Di Lorenzo, but one month home from a convent school in Cleveland. She was the daughter of old Pietro Di Lorenzo, one of a colony of Italian market gardeners, who, ten years before, had settled on tracts north of Hayesville. Pietro had approached him a week before, proposing to buy one of the Conwell farms near his own patch, for Pietro had prospered. Conwell had referred him to the agent he had appointed. Now Conwell surprised the agent by taking the whole matter from his hands just as he was about to close with the Italians.

Pietro must call at his home, insisted Conwell, for the final transfer. And as Conwell had expected, Pietro brought Conchita and her mother with him, that



Conchita, in her learning, might see that her father was not cheated.

And old Pietro and his wife marveled at the hospitality of this rich young land-owner and at his astounding lack of business ability that gave a bargain that was the wonder of the colony.

Conwell was no laggard in love. And Conchita too knew, and was not loath to admit, that she had met her man. Half a dozen times a week Conchita dragged her mother to the village, now on one pretext, now on another. Each time Conwell was there to meet them. There never was time or opportunity for more than lingering handclasps and smiles and a whisper now and then as they walked and talked, but these they quite boldly enjoyed in the very shadow of the mother's eyes. And one night Conwell bravely presented himself at old Pietro's home and announced his suit for Conchita's hand.

Pietro came from the Province of Abruzzi. He had brought his wife from his native village, as Conchita's tall, deep-bosomed strength and waving red hair attested. And so, after the fashion of his people, old Pietro told Conwell that his fate rested with the girl.

That night as he was leaving, Conchita followed him to the doorway. He took her in his arms and kissed her for the first time. Conwell wanted to wed immediately. But the mother demurred. Her daughter go to her husband without a trousseau? The daughter of Pietro Di Lorenzo was not so lightly taken from her father's home. It would be weeks, months, perhaps. And Conwell had to curb his impatience.

But Conwell was not the only one who had found Conchita fair. Up in the mazes of the Mayflower Road district of Cleveland, where Calabria and Naples meet to plan infamy, where Camorra and Mafia wrangle over the spoils, was Ercolle Calabrese. He too had seen Conchita, first when the sister took the girls of the school out for an airing, and again when she returned to the school after a vacation at home. Then he watched for her.

This woman, decided Ercolle, he must have. She was beautiful. A man's pulses might well leap as he thought of

having those red, scornful lips for his own. And then, when one had tired of lips and kisses—well, Ercolle knew of markets where prices for owners of red lips and willowy bodies ran high, after their spirits had been well broken.

He demanded Conchita's hand from Pietro. The old man answered him with scorn.

Ercolle went back to Cleveland. In the back room of an Italian café he talked to others of his clan.

One night a heavy motor-car, without number or lights, slipped out of an obscure little garage in Cleveland. In it were Ercolle and three others. An old Italian baker saw them go and crossed himself with a Sicilian oath. The wolf-pack was on the hunt.

An hour after darkness, a car, disabled, stopped in front of the Di Lorenzo farmhouse. Pietro came to offer help. In the doorway Conchita and her mother watched. A bit of leather, heavy with lead, a muscular wrist behind it, crumbled Pietro into a heap in the dust. Tense fingers tightened about the mother's throat until she was silenced. A shawl flung over Conchita's head stifled her screams. Hurriedly she was bound and thrust into the rear of the machine.

The purr of the motor had died in the distance when Pietro put an uncertain hand to his head and sat up. In the dooryard he saw the form of his wife stirring feebly. He knew in an instant. This was no new thing. Young girls often disappear so in the "Little Italys" of America.

IN half an hour a score of Pietro's neighbors were in chase, in a couple of wheezing auto's, a motor-truck, nondescript farm wagons trailing behind. A frightened lad, dispatched by Pietro, brought word to Conwell. More delay, while he borrowed a friend's car. Conwell cursed the wait as he sent the car hurtling toward "Little Italy." Afterward he blessed it, for, because he did not know which way the bandits or the pursuers went, he had to stop to ask a farmhand for word of them. And the farmhand probably was the one man in the world who had seen the fugitive car





In the five Chinese he saw the crew of a pirate junk.

bear off to the east toward Pittsburgh, while the struggling posse kept straight on toward Cleveland. Then Conwell realized that he himself must save his woman, or she was lost.

It was an unfamiliar road and an unfamiliar car. There were sudden turns where disaster grasped for him, but always grasped a second too late. A dozen times the car shot into the air, ready to turn over, then righted itself and plunged onward. Sheer chance kept Conwell in the roadway and going.

Ninety miles out of Hayesville, over the Pennsylvania border, he found them.

The black car had halted in a lonely bit of road that dipped between frowning hills. One of its crew lay underneath, working desperately.

A bullet brushed Conwell's cheek as he leaped from his car toward the shadowy figures grouped about the other machine.

In the rabbit-warrens of the Hill District of Pittsburgh lay safety for the Calabrese and his fellows, safety where he might tame his prey undisturbed. And a life, out here in these lonely hills, was nothing.

Another crack and spit of flame almost in Conwell's face. The bullet found his shoulder but missed the bone. He scarce felt it. Then he was upon the man with the gun. Swiftly his hands gripped the wrist that held the weapon. Up and up and back; then both Conwell's hands pulled the wrist downward. There was a crack, a scream, and the gun-man went under Conwell's feet, his arm broken at the shoulder.

Then Conwell was among the others. It was close quarters now. No uncertain, noisy guns for the remaining three of the wolf-pack. Fingers had found well-worn knife-hilts, and three darting blades barred Conwell's rush.

But only for a moment. There was only the sound of breath whistling through teeth as the four struggled. Eel-like bodies slipped in and out of Conwell's grip. Then one who encountered those bear-like arms failed to slip out again. The sometime stoker felt the chest give way and threw the body aside.

Two were left. One Conwell caught Yair in the face with his fist. The head snapped back against the tonneau of the car, and its owner dropped.

Ercolle was left. For a little while his knife flashed, while Conwell sought for an opening. He found it, and calloused palms closed over the throat of the leader. Fingers hardened on the handle of a stoker's shovel pried into the jugular.

It was when he realized that his own stertorous breathing was all that he heard, that Conwell stood up, still holding the dangling thing in his hands. He dropped it, and it lay as it fell.

There was no movement in the rear of the bandit-car. Huddled on the floor was a form wrapped in a criss-cross of rope and blanket.

But the lips that his own found were warm, and by and by the long lashes lifted and Conchita smiled into his eyes.

A trifling flesh-wound where the second bullet went home, a few knife-slashes on hands and arms—Conwell hardly felt them. He was glad for them, though, when the girl bound them with strips from her skirt.

AND so they came back to humdrum Hayesville, humdrum no longer—Conwell driving, beside him his woman whom he had taken from under the knives of his enemies.

He took Conchita home. Then he drove to Hayesville's combination fire-station, city hall and police-station, and gravely reported the whole affair to the village marshal. He declared the gang ought to be arrested.

Conwell settled down to content in Hayesville. For he has known Romance. By his fireside he will tell you.

He will tell you of the romance of the South Seas, of the girl he saved there by the moon-white beach and the palm trees and the coral reefs. He will tell you of the slave-den of Shanghai. He believes it.

And he tells it to his wife Conchita. He tells her that he regrets that here in sleepy Hayesville she has never known Romance.

**"A Long Road," by Mr. Sprigle, will be in the August Red Book, on the news-stands July 23rd.**



# Clarissa-Out-of-a-Book

*A summer-time story, just as different from anything else Mr. Terhune has written as a story could be.*

By Albert Payson Terhune

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. GARDNER-SOPER

**T**HE twisting country road lay dust-pallid, with pulsing heat-waves rising against its skyline. Floury dust lay an inch deep on it, sending up little swirling dust-devils when a stray whiff of breeze touched it. The wayside grass and leaves were powdered gray. The bushes were a-droop from the month's drouth.

Drayton, chugging along in his small runabout, had been breathing dust-powder for the past hour. He had been viewing the whole world through a stinging dust-haze, a haze that made his eyes smart, that pringled his nostrils, that sanded his thirsty throat.

Such wind as the moderate speed of his car managed to drive against his face was hot and dry. His tongue was parched. His head ached from the heat. And he had another full half-hour's ride before he could hope to reach the inn at Sparta Junction where he was spending his vacation.

For the last hour or more he had been

keeping a dust-beared lookout on either side of the way for one of those purling and silvery roadside springs which are found in crystal profusion in summer fiction, and which in real life—fortunately for those who would avoid typhoid—are a decided rarity.

Drayton had found no icy spring whereat he might quench his teasing thirst. But now, at a new twist of the road, on the outskirts of a village, he saw the next best thing. Above a four-foot rough-cast wall rose the boughs of an orchard. And among the leaves of one tree, not twenty yards beyond the wall, shone big yellow harvest apples—dozens of them, golden spheres, palpably ripe: a sight to make a thirsting man forget that trespass is a misdemeanor and that theft is a felony.

Drayton brought his runabout to a jarring halt in the roadside grass, close to the wall. Then, from the seat, he stepped directly across to the wall-top and paused to scout the scene.

A glance showed him a rectangular space, perhaps four acres in area, bounded on three sides by stone wall and filled with more or less orderly lines of ancient apple trees. At the far end, half invisible through the foliage, he could catch the outlines of a rambling white house with green blinds, and with a white picket fence beyond. The orchard, so far as a casual survey could tell him, seemed vacant of human or animal life. And the leafy boughs might be counted on to shut him off from observation from any of the house's back windows.

Whereat, Drayton dropped to the ground inside the enclosure and made for the near-by harvest-apple tree. The ground beneath the spread of gnarled limbs was strewn with fallen apples. Stuffing one into each of his side pockets and munching thirstily at a third, Drayton turned to retrace his way. He took a half-score steps and then halted, the partly eaten apple tumbling forgotten from his hand.

Directly before him, on the sward in an angle of the wall, sat a girl—a girl such as came oftener into the vision of Romney or of Sir Joshua than into that of any observer since those beloved portraitists' days.

She was small and slender—almost fragile, scarce greater in stature than a well-grown child of thirteen. She was clad in flowered muslin, billowy in cut, low in neck and with elbow sleeves. A soft white fichu and filmy lace elbow-length mitts modified these brevities. The voluminous and multi-flowered skirt was spread on the grass far to either side. From its hem peeped one small foot in a French-kid sandal slipper.

The girl's fair hair was piled high above her little head, in a mode that went out with the first Empire. A tall tortoise-shell comb topped it. Her brow was broad, and the eyebrows were level. The eyes—which just now were surveying the amazed Drayton with no faintest hint of embarrassment—were blue and almost too big for the daintily featured face.

In one half-mittened hand she held an apple—an apple wherein a single semicircle of toothmarks showed. In

her other hand was a book, battered of binding and yellowed of leaf, a bound volume of *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1764. In her lap, completely filling it, reposed a large gray cat with a scarlet bow about its furry neck.

Drayton stared. The girl with her wide, fearless blue eyes, and the cat with its sleepy yellow orbs, stared back at him, though according to tradition the girl should have sprung to her feet with a little startled cry on his sudden advent, and the cat should have scuttled hysterically up the trunk of the nearest tree.

His arrival had interrupted a peaceful hour in this picturesque nook. Yet neither occupant of the niche showed the faintest annoyance. To Drayton it seemed that they were willing to suspend judgment until they should hear his side of the story.

JUST beyond the wall, on a commonplace and modern village road, his commonplace and ultra-modern gasoline runabout was waiting. And at a single bound, he had come from all that sort of thing, into a veritable bit of the eighteenth century. Like one who goes from glaring electric light into soft candle-gleam, he was inclined to blink bewilderedly.

The girl looked not a day over twenty-one. Yet, to judge by her costume, she must be nearer one hundred and fifty. Oh, it was sheer nonsense! Drayton roused himself from the spell, enough to rub the dusty back of one hand impatiently across his eyes. Whereat, the dream-girl did not melt away, after the approved method of dream-women. Instead, she spoke.

"La, sir!" she said (and her voice was sweet and thin and mincing like that of a Sheridan ingénue), "la, sir! I trust we have not alarmed you?"

"I—I—" began Drayton, brilliantly.

Then he paused. And she spoke again, this time in a tone and diction more suited to present-day needs.

"You are very welcome to the apples I saw you take," she went on. "We don't enforce our 'Trespass' signs, except with tramps. Please don't look so much as if you thought you were going to be scolded."

With the girl's momentary descent to the language of his own century, Drayton's tongue-tied diffidence died.

"I owe you a very humble apology. I'm afraid," he began. "It was rude of me to come charging into your orchard sanctuary like this, and to steal your apples. I was dead with thirst, and they looked so cool and good. I—"

"Take more," she adjured him. "Take as many as you like. And," she added in a careless graciousness the sincerity and impersonality of which he could not doubt, "you look hot and tired. It's cool here by the wall. Wont you sit down and rest for a few minutes before you go? Bring some apples over here with you."

THERE was no hint of coquetry, of familiarity, of boldness, in the girl's invitation, or in her manner. There was nothing beyond a dissociated, wholly sexless friendliness. It was such an invitation as one man or one child might have bestowed on another. The blue eyes met his frankly, in pleasant welcome; and she shifted the wide-flung hem of her skirt a little to make room for him in the wall-niche beside her.

"Thank you, very much," Drayton heard himself saying in a voice he tried to make matter-of-fact. "It is the hottest day of the year, I think. And this is the only cool place I've found. But I'm interrupting your reading?" he suggested, with a second glance at the time-smear volume.

"No," she denied, "I have read it all through, twice. I have read most of them through twice. I wish there were more."

"More?"

"More books. There are only two shelves. They belonged to Grandfather. Father used to love to read them, just as I do. They are all old—very old, older than this dress."

Catching the bewilderment in his look, she explained:

"This isn't really my dress, you know. People don't wear such clothes nowadays. I wish they did. I found it in the cedar chest in the south attic. They belonged to my father's grandmother, the shoes and mitts and fichu and comb and all. We have a picture of her wearing

them. So I knew the way all the things should be put on. I often dress up like this and come out here to sit. It's lots of fun."

"And so bring back the sweet old Colonial days, by putting on Colonial dress and sitting out in this Old World corner and reading Old World books! It is a delightful idea!"

"Yes," she assented, as if glad that he caught the spirit of her idea. "And making up Old World plays and living in them too. I like it so much better than the nowadays life. Don't you?"

"I always shall, after this," he promised on impulse.

She nodded grave approval.

"I can talk as they did, too," she told him, tapping the frayed cover of *The Gentleman's Magazine* with one mittened hand. "And I love to. I was thinking that way, when I spoke to you first."

A GLINT of fun lighted the great eyes, and with mincing voice she continued:

"Sir, I fain would offer you a dish of Chinese tea, to cheer and solace you. For I see full well you are not in spirits, and I fear me the heat hath proven an overshrewd companion for you this day. But my revered aunf is from home, and it were not meet I entertain gentlefolk in the drawing-room in her absence. Therefore I crave your indulgence for not bidding you to come within."

Drayton rose to his feet, bowed low and sweeping the ground with his cap, made answer:

"Gramercy for thy sweet courtesy, O most amiable of thy sex. But put thyself not out to be at pains for mine entertainment. While I would full fain meet thy lady aunt and sip tea with her, yet I am right content to rest me for a space e'en as I am."

The speech cost him no little effort. And he was repaid by her delighted laugh. But at once her face grew painfully grave again as she replied:

"You are prodigious civil, sir, I protest. May I make bold to ask how so courtly a gentleman styles himself? of what name and lineage may you be?—if I give no offense in the asking?"

"My sponsors in baptism," he re-



He stared dully. The girl with her wide, fearless blue eyes,  
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and the cat with its sleepy yellow orbs, stared back at him.

turned in like vein, "gave me the name of Hugh Drayton. I be a scrivener by occupation."

"A fair name and a fair calling," she deigned to approve. "I be Mistress Clarissa Harlowe, vastly at your service."

"Clarissa Harlowe?" echoed Drayton, forgetting his rôle. "Why, *Clarissa Harlowe* was the heroine of old Richardson's book—"

"'Twas ever a favorite of my sire," she answered, in stately explanation. "I doubt not that 'twas he that had me christened 'Clarissa,' my given name being 'Harlowe.'"

"Clarissa Harlowe!" he repeated whimsically, the name seeming to fit her and her costume to a charm.

"And this," Clarissa resumed, laying a mittened hand on the furry head of the recumbent gray cat, "this is my chief counselor and confidant. Master Hugh Drayton, I crave leave to present Peter Grimm, my cat. Saw ye ever so softly gray a coat as his?"

"'Tis assuredly soft," he agreed, passing his hand down the cat's back. "But I trust his grayness is premature and—ouch!"

This very unclassical interjection was caused by the cat, which suddenly nipped with needle-like teeth the hand of the stranger who ventured such liberties with his coat. A long red claw-scratch on the offending hand added further testimony to Peter Grimm's resentment of familiarity on so short acquaintance.

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl, dropping into the present century, with a look of real concern. "I do hope he didn't hurt you much."

"Not at all!" lied Drayton, putting his hand behind him. "It was my own fault. I was trespassing on his fur."

"He is very temperamental, Peter Grimm is," explained Clarissa. "I think it's partly the liver."

"He's bilious? I never knew that cats—"

"The liver we feed him," she corrected. "Every night of his life he has exactly one quarter of a pound of liver. It keeps his coat glossy and it keeps him from getting mange; and it isn't enough

to keep him from being a gorgeous mouser. You *are* a gorgeous mouser, aren't-you, Peter Grimm?" she broke off, turning to the temperamental cat for confirmation.

But Peter Grimm had once more curled himself up in a heap in her lap and refused to testify. Clarissa continued:

"He's the best mouser in all this neighborhood. He's famous for it. And he's much the prettiest cat around here, too. I think it's the liver. He's had his quarter-pound of it every single evening since he was six months old. He's never been allowed to miss it once."

"You spoke of your aunt," said Drayton, who was more interested in the cat's young mistress. "Would you mind very much if I should ask her permission to come and see you? I—"

A shade of sadness flitted across the girl's face.

"It wouldn't be any use," she said. "She wouldn't like it, I'm sure. But—I'm here every clear afternoon after lunch. Wont you come over the wall again some time soon—to-morrow perhaps? And we'll play once more that we're people out of a book—just as we did a few minutes ago. Please come. Wont you?"

**HUGH DRAYTON** was halfway back to his inn before his supermuddled thoughts cleared enough to be set forth in anything like logical sequence. And even then there was scant logic in what they told him.

On the face of it he had met a woman who, without introduction, had spoken to him, had invited him to sit beside her, had talked and jested with him as with a time-proven friend, and had wound up the shocking performance by asking him to call on her, clandestinely, the next afternoon. All of which was not in the least what Drayton cared for.

On the other hand, the impersonal friendliness, the fearless frankness, the stark absence of anything but sexless comradeship for a congenial soul—all these weighed far more heavily with the man (to his own surprise) than did the uncouth facts.

He was not one atom in love with this

puzzling girl-out-of-a-book. He knew that. But there was something so out of the ordinary, so elusive, so elfin about her, that he could not drive her from his mind.

At last he decided she was a young woman who had, for some reason, singularly little knowledge of the outer world and its trammels. And he decided that he, a denizen of that same outer world, would be taking a despicable advantage of her sweet ignorance should he keep up the chance acquaintance. He would not go back to the orchard. . . . Yet the next afternoon found him swinging over the four-foot wall and dropping down on the orchard grass beyond!

At the same moment a distant flutter of white caught his eye. Through the leafage he saw her. She was just emerging from the far-off house. And as he watched, she picked her way daintily along the path through the trees, toward him.

The sense of unreality again encompassed Drayton as he looked at the slender figure in its hundred-and-fifty-year-old dress, its tortoise-shell comb holding the high-piled fair hair in place, the heelless French-kid sandals, the silk mitts.

As she caught sight of the man, she quickened her pace. Coming nearer, she held out both her hands to him in a gesture that was more childlike than womanly in its eager appeal.

"I'm so glad you came!" she exclaimed. "I was afraid you wouldn't or else that you had come and gone again. I couldn't get out here any sooner. I've been having such a horrid time!"

She spoke breathlessly. Looking closely, Drayton saw signs of tears.

"Can I help?" he asked, without releasing the hands that had so appealingly met his own.

"Oh *will* you?" she cried eagerly. "I so hoped you'd offer. *Will* you?"

"You know I will," he assured her.

"Thank you!" she breathed, in deep relief. "I'll never forget it. It's—it's about Peter Grimm."

"Oh!"

"It's about Peter Grimm," she repeated. "He's going to be locked up. And—and starved."

Drayton did not answer. He was wrestling with flat chagrin. A damsel in distress—a damsel he had vowed to succor—and her only grief was over a miserable "temperamental" cat!

"Mr. Hixson—he's our postmaster, you know," she was saying, "—his post office is overrun with rats. They ate up eleven dollars worth of stamps last night, for the glue on the backs of them—the back of the stamps. And he came and borrowed Peter Grimm, because Peter Grimm's the best mouser around here. It was just an hour or so ago. And I didn't know anything about it. I sent down his quarter-pound of liver as soon as I found it out, and I wrote Mr. Hixson to be *sure* to give it to him for supper. And—he sent the liver back and said only hungry cats are any good as mousers, and if Peter Grimm had any liver he wouldn't be so anxious to eat rats. And he's going to keep Peter Grimm all night. All *night*! He's never been away from home since he was born. And he's never gone without his liver. since—"

"But," broke in Drayton, seeking to stay the torrent of childlike explanation, "what can I do? I'm awfully sorry about the cat, of course, but what—"

"Why, I've been thinking it all out. And a man's got to do it. I can't."

"Do what? Thrash the erring postmaster, or storm the prison and rescue the temperamental Peter Grimm, or—?"

"No," she replied, with very evident reluctance at having to veto such alluring offers. "No, I'm afraid not. It's a duller, commonsensible favor I want to ask of you."

"Unto the half of my kingdom," he quoted, resigning himself to her whim and mildly stirred by curiosity. "What shall it be?"

AN ant was crawling along one of Clarissa's innumerable flowered flounces. She shook the skirt to dislodge the insect. An almost imperceptible breath of lavender came to the man's nostrils. It seemed the complement of the yellowish lace on her sleeves and girdle. Again Drayton was back a hundred and fifty years; the modern world seemed very far away. He brushed the

odd fantasy from his mind and tried to pay heed to what Clarissa was saying. For she had begun to speak again, not in the archaic diction she loved, but with a directness worthy of Napoleon.

"The post office," she began, "is just to the right of the general store. It's only half a mile down the road. You must have passed it on the way here. It's only one big room and it's painted gray. There are three windows. They are locked at night, of course. But the locks don't amount to anything. Once I heard Mr. Hixson say anyone could run a knife-blade between the sashes. He says he's going to have patent locks put on—when he gets around to it."

From the beaded reticule at her girdle she drew forth a small oblong package and held it out to Drayton. Mechanically he took it. Through the several thicknesses of paper it had a moistly chilly feeling.

"The windows are nearly five feet from the ground," she resumed. "And the lock is much too high for me to reach. That's how I happened to think of getting *you* to do it."

"Do what?"

"Open the back window and—"

"Break into a post office? What under heaven! Why, Miss Harlowe, it's a Federal offense."

"Break into the post office?" she echoed. "Of course not. What would be the sense of that? How silly of you! The post office closes at six, every evening. So does the store. By nine, that part of the village hasn't a soul around it. No one would see you. All you have to do is to open the window, toss the liver down into the room, shut the window and come away. It's very simple. A baby could do it—if he was tall enough."

"The—the liver?"

"In that package. It's Peter Grimm's supper. I couldn't sleep if I thought of him starving all night."

Her mittened hand was on his arm; her big eyes were looking up at him, in perfect trust and gratitude. Drayton made one futile effort at sanity.

"But you said the post office is full of rats," he argued. "Peter Grimm will have a hearty supper on them. Why bother about the liver?"

"He doesn't like rats. He kills them, but he doesn't care for them after that, except when he's fearfully hungry. And—and I know I shouldn't sleep a wink—and you *promised*, you know."

With a groan, Drayton bade farewell to common sense. He could no more have resisted that appeal than he could have refused the gift of a doll to a child.

"Mistress Clarissa," quoth he, "I deem myself right favored of the gods, to do this quest as your gallant knight. The dragon shall be duly slain—fed, I mean."

She swept him a low courtesy.

"I vow 'tis monstrous polite of you, Sir Hugh," she declared, "and minstrels yet unborn shall chant the tale of your prowess. You have lifted the vapors of dread from my heart. Fare forth to your devoirs, and when you return conqueror, you shall wear my scarf in your helmet, for guerdon."

"Full blithely do I hie me forth," he pledged himself. "And lady, I pray you be at the casement of your bower between the ninth and tenth hour this night. For as I gallop back past here from my quest, my palfrey shall—shall honk four times to let you know I have fulfilled your wish."

NEVERTHELESS, as Drayton set out on his idiotic errand that night, he felt anything but blithe. The commission seemed to him utterly ridiculous and unworthy a grown man. More than once he was minded to throw the package of liver in a ditch and turn back to the inn. Yet he had promised. And the little woman had trusted him to keep his word.

Leaving his runabout a hundred yards away, and switching off its lights, he walked along the unlighted village street to the post-office building and made his way to the rear of it.

Opening the packet of liver and laying it on the high sill, he took out his knife and, reaching upward, passed its largest blade between the upper and lower sashes. He had to work wholly by sense of touch, for here under the trees the night was pitch black.

Presently, his groping knife-blade found the catch. A single pressure, and



"Up with your hands, young man.  
Up with 'em!"

the catch slid back. A sharp push, and the lower half of the window was raised. With his hand free, Drayton felt for the liver. His fingers closed over it. And then, simultaneously, several things happened.

Something soft, but violently pro-

pelled through the darkness, smote Drayton squarely in the face. The force of the impact, as he was still standing on tiptoe, nearly upset him. He reeled backward two steps to regain his balance.

As he did so, a dazzling dagger of

light from an electric torch pierced his eyes, and a voice from that same darkness observed:

"Up with your hands, young man. Up with 'em! Way up! Now then, Mr. Titus, I'll trouble you to go through him for concealed weapons and such. It's all safe. I've got him covered."

"What's—what's all this?" demanded Hugh.

"I warn you," came the preternaturally solemn voice from behind the light: "Anything you say is liable to be used against you. Now, whatcher got to say?"

"Nothing on him that I can find, Tim," reported Mr. Titus, a dapper, nervous little man, "except a penknife and a piece of raw meat."

"Raw meat!" triumphantly echoed the light-holder. "That's the man, all right. Same one that smashed into the post office up at Zion. Don't you remember how they found the postmaster's watchdog, up there, dead next morning? Poisoned meat! Same here, too. Lucky for Hixson he don't keep a dog. Hands up. I told you twice!" he snapped in last-warning tones.

"Look here!" cried Drayton. "Who in blazes do you take me for? I'm—"

"I take you for a slick gentleman that Uncle Sam's so anxious to clap hands on that there's a seven-hundred-and-fifty-dollar reward out for him. A feller who's been making a round of up-State post offices and borrowing stamps and money and so on, out of 'em. I've been watching this post office every night for a week on the chance that maybe you might—"

"I'm Hugh Drayton. I'm a newspaper man. I'm spending my vacation over at the Hillslope Inn, at—"

"I aint overmuch versed in burglar-etiquette," responded the man behind the light with elephantine irony, "but if it's the thing to make introductions at times like this, why, I'm Timothy Laher, marshal of this village. And the gentleman who's just relieved you of your weapon and the poisoned meat is Mr. Titus, who teaches the school here. I happened to meet him, passing by, and I—"

"Poisoned meat!" snarled Drayton. "You idiot! Here! Call up the Hill-

slope Inn if you doubt that I'm all right."

"I guess the lock-up's good enough inn for you to-night, friend."

"I came here," protested Drayton, realizing the futility of his story, "to bring this liver to Miss Harlowe's cat, that's locked in the post office. I hate to bring her name into this, but it seems the only way to avoid a lot of trouble and publicity for both of us. Mr. Hixson wanted the cat to catch some of the rats in there. She was afraid the cat might be hungry. So she asked me to bring some liver to—"

"Sure it wasn't a dish of ice cream?" interposed the marshal.

"No cat in there," reported the schoolmaster, who had lighted a match and peered in through the opened window. Nothing alive in there at all."

"Miss Harlowe—"

"Who's Miss Harlowe?" demanded the Marshal.

"Miss Clarissa Harlowe," returned Drayton, "is the young lady who lives at that big white house, half a mile above here, on this same road—the house with the big orchard behind it and the gray stone wall all around."

"And you say a Miss Harlowe lives there?" asked the marshal. "Sure that's the house?"

"Of course I'm sure. She lives there with her aunt."

"And what might Auntie's name be?"

"I—I don't know."

"Well, I do. Mrs. Henry Bliss lives there. I happen to know because I married her sister. The only flaw in your story is that she hasn't a niece, and that there's no young lady living there, nor ever has been. Hands up! 'Twont do you no good to grab your head like that, unless you can shake a better lie out of it next time."

"Mr. Laher," stammered Drayton, with one last mighty effort at making possibility out of the impossible, "I've a ten-dollar bill in my pocket. Wait!"—forestalling a virtuous retort. "I'm not bribing you. I'm offering it as a reward, if you'll take me up to Mrs. Henry Bliss' home before you lodge me in the lock-up. Put the handcuffs on me if you're afraid of a trick."



TEN minutes later, the marshal and the schoolmaster on either side of him, Drayton stood on the threshold of the rambling white house in whose orchard he had met his impossible dream-woman. At the marshal's summons a tall and angular woman of fifty had come to the door, and she stood now, listening to Laher's report and glaring in cold indignation at the handcuffed malefactor.

It was not at her bony and rugged face that Drayton was looking as the marshal declaimed. His eyes were fixed in rapt incredulity at the height of her ankles—gingham shrouded ankles against which a large gray cat was effusively rubbing its arched back.

Peter Grimm! So much of the affair, then, was not a dream.

Peeping shyly around Mrs. Bliss' arm was a lank-haired, pencil-legged child of perhaps thirteen, her eyes round with excitement as she stared at the prisoner. A "hired girl"—not a "maid"—filled the interstices on the other side, wiping red hands on a dirty blue apron, and gaping like a Japanese goldfish at the three men. The lamplight from behind revealed the sextet sketchily.

"I never knew anyone called Harlowe," coldly announced Mrs. Bliss, as Laher's recital ended. "And there is no young lady staying here. And I haven't a niece to my name. And you know it, Tim Laher."

"Yes, yes," agreed the marshal, "I knew it. So did everybody. But this crook, here, didn't. If he had, he'd of picked out some other house to put the story onto."

"But," said the woman judicially, "there's one part of his yarn that's true, and I can't think how he came to find it out. The cat—"

"It's—it's *all* true!" wailed a voice that made Drayton jump from his doze of hopeless apathy. "It's *all* true!"

It was the lank-haired, pencil-legged child who spoke. And now Drayton recalled that for the past five minutes she had been trying to interrupt. "It's all true!" she repeated. "And it's all my

fault! Oh, Mr. Drayton, I'm so sorry! Honestly, I am! Honestly!"

"Gertie, be still!" snapped Mrs. Bliss. "Run along to your room. Now, about that cat, Tim: I really did send—"

"It's my fault, Mamma," insisted the child, holding her ground. "I sent him with the liver to feed Peter Grimm."

"You sent him. He said—"

"And when Peter Grimm came home a few minutes ago, I supposed he'd let him out. I was waiting at the window upstairs, as he told me to, to hear his motor-horn—"

Drayton remembered the soft impact in his face as he had opened the post-office window. The Return of Peter Grimm was explained. But he scarce noted the fact. He was staring agape at the child, the over-big blue eyes, the lean, small-featured face, the corn-colored hair, the childish simplicity and directness that would be elfin charm in a grown woman.

"I—I met him in the orchard," Gertie was sobbing, "when I was playing 'Old Times,' in those things of Great-grandma's that you said I could have. He was ever so nice, and he knows how to talk book-language just as I like to, and—"

"You said," put in Laher, whirling on Drayton, with a last clutch at the chance that he had made a capture, "you said it was a 'young lady'—Mrs. Bliss' niece—named 'Harlowe.'"

"I—I told him that," said Gertie, bravely fighting back her tears. "It was part of our game—all except being a young lady. I never told him any such a story. Why, he'd have known better, just by looking at me—"

"Yes," muttered Drayton, confusedly, as one waking from a dream, "I—I would. But I didn't."

"And now that I have gotten you into such a terrible scrape," faltered Gertie, "I suppose you'll never, *never* come to see me again?"

"Oh, yes, I will," promised Drayton, touched, as before, by the almost infant-like appeal in her face and voice. "Indeed, I will. In—in just about seven years."

*"In His Wife's Name,"* which is in some ways the best of the many excellent stories Mr. Terhune has written for The Red Book Magazine, will be in the August issue, on the news-stands July 23rd.



## The Last Laugh

*FRED A. GROSS, assistant chief of detectives, gave up his flat in Chicago, to build a home in a suburb. In the following letters—they are just about the funniest lot Ring Lardner has written—we learn of his efforts to break into society.*

By Ring W. Lardner

ILLUSTRATED BY F. FOX



Allison, Ill., Jan. 2.  
ROTHER CHAR-

LEY. well Charley I suppose you been haveing rotten weather down east just the same like we been haveing out here and here it is only Jan. and me all ready sick & tired of winter and wisht spring was

here all ready but of corse they aint no chanct of real good weather for 4 mos. & a mans waisting time when you wish for some thing they cant have. If it done any good to wish I would be chief of police all ready and geting the big money.

Well Charley when you move out in a subburb they aint no chanct for a man to spend a quite evning at home onct in a wile because theys some thing doing evry minut out here ether Co. comes to our house to set a round & play cards &

lap up our beer or else we go some wheres else to some bodys house & play cards but you couldnt drowned your self in the beer they give us when wear at there house but when there at our house its diff runt. But Grace is haveing the time of her life & says she didnt never know what a good time was when she lived in the city & says she use to think she wouldnt care nothing a bout socitey but its grate stuff when you get in to it so is long is she feels that way I wont try & spoil her fun tho it keeps me broke buying clean collars & geting my best close prest.

Theys a little irish girl that lives down the st. a bout 17 yrs. old & Grace highers her to come & set in the house wile wear out nights & shes got a fellow stuck on her & he comes & sets with her & Grace pays the girl \$.50 a night & I guess thats pretty soft for the girl eh Charley because she gets \$.50 for spending a evning in a house thats a hole lot better then her own house & pretty soft for her bow to because it dont cost him nothing for a place to spark his girl a

way from her old man & old lady & when I was cortin Grace it use to cost me real money to take her out some wheres so her old man couldnt keep popping in on us evry time I got ready to hold her hand. By rights the girls bow should ought to pay the \$.50 insted of Grace because if hes any kind of a sport it would cost him more then \$.50 to take her to Hofmanns garden or some wheres else a way from her perants. But Grace says we cant leave the babys in the house a lone because they might start crying but there both to sleepy to cry in the evning & besides supose they did start crying the little irish girl & her bows probly to busy smacking each other to hear them & even if they herd them what would they do a bout it because I never found nothing yet that would make them kids stop crying when they wanted to cry unlest it was a shot gun or some thing. Well Grace says she thot it would be nice to show the little irish girl & her bow where we kept our beer so they could help them self if they got dry but I says nothing doing & if they want to drink our beer the girls bow can pay \$.15 a pt. for it like hed half to pay in a garden only when he was helping him self to our beer he wouldnt half to tip no rotten waiters. I guess Grace thinks wear runing the county hospitle or some thing.

Well Charley I hope you & the Mrs. is getting a long O.K. & standing the bad weather O. K. & I guess they must get more for postige stamps in N. Y. city then they do here & is that the reason you dont write onct in a wile.

kindest to Mary.

FRED A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill. Jan. 11.

DEAR CHARLEY. well Charley we was to a party the night before last & wear going to an other party next wk. & it takes most of my time getting my shoes

shined & they talk about Chicago being a live place well Charley its like a grave yd. come pared with this place & some thing doing evry minut when your a good dresser & the peopl likes you.

The party last night was over to Curtis house the wood and coal man & no wonder his wife ast us to the party because there geting a bout \$20.00 dollars per mo. out of us for 2 & ½ ton of coal & it wouldnt hurt them none to give us a party onct a mo. & have champagne wine but they didnt give us no wine only beer & not hardley enough of that to wet your tongue & of corse Id rather have a glass of beer then all the wine in the world but when Im dry 1 or 2 bottles dont even clear my throte & they might is well give me a spoon full of butter milk & expect me to have a good time & if I was in the wood & coal business I bet I would give my frends enough to eat and drink when they come to see me espeshaly when the peopl that comes to see you is the peopl that you might say buys your groserys for you. & all they give us to eat was ice cream & cake & coffee & Grace hadent gave me much supper on acct. she thot we would get a reglar meal to the party. I bet the next time I go to a party a round here I will stick a couple crackers in my pocket & a little cheese to go with the beer but I guess if I want enough beer I will half to take a long some of my own to.



I never found nothing yet that would make them kids stop crying.

Well they told us it was going to be a card party so I & Grace thot of corse they would play cinch or rummy or may be whist but when we got over there they sprung this here game they call auction bridge whist. Mrs. Curtis says if I played whist I wouldnt have no trubble lerning this here game but in this game you bid back & 4th. like pitch only you half to say what are you bidding on & they got a lot of funny sines that means some thing & a mans got to go threw collige to lern all them sines so I just set there & played when it was my turn & onct I had a hole fist full of spades & bid 3 spades but my pardner took it a way from me with 1 heart & that counts more then 3 spades & I left her have it & they wasent a heart in my hand & when I layed it down she balled me out like it was some crime Id pulled off & we got set & she balled me out some more & of corse I couldnt say nothing back because she was a woman & I didnt even know her name & all I says to her was If you had left me have it with 3 spades they wouldnt of been nothing to it & she says you couldnt of even made 3 spades because you couldnt make nothing only a mess of things so I says yes & you couldnt make

nothing only a monkey out of your self so the peopl we was playing with give her the laugh & she seen she was getting the worst of it so she shut up her mouth.

Well Charley I & Grace didnt win no prize but the woman that give me the balling out didnt win nothing nether so she wasent as smart is she thot she was but any way the gents prize was a box to put your collars in & if I had of win I would of throwed it a way as soon is we got out side the house because I aint got so many collars that they aint room for all of them in the drawer & of corse I dont never have them in the house all at onct nether because theys 3 or 4 of them gos. to the landery evry wk. The womans prize was a pare of silk stockings & even if Grace had of win them she would half to take them down town & change them off because they was plane black & she aint in morning for no body. So the peopl that win the prizes was well come to them eh Charley.

Well the Carrys is giveing a party next wk. & we come home with them from the Curtis party & Mr. Carry ast me how did I in joy my self & I says O.K. only I could of got a way with a couple more bottles of beer with out

standing, on the piano & singing a song & wouldnt have no trubble keeping a wake if they played rummy or cinch or some game with a little life to it so I guess after what I said the Carrys will know enough to play some kind of cards at there party where you dont half to wave no diffrent colered flags to tell your pardner what to bid & give us enough to drink & not serve there beer in no medisine dropper like they was afrade to give us a over dose & poison a man.

Well Charley the rotten weather keeps



I slipt my overcoat and sox and shoes on over my night gown and went over and rapped at the door.



I got it all fixed up all ready with the man that runs the weekly paper out here to stick something in a bout the party.

up & I suppose the merchants is glad the cold weather keeps up because they all ways say they dont do no business when it aint cold a round after xmas time so some bodys satusfide with the weather I mean the merchants & I guess may be they get there coal at  $\frac{1}{2}$  price or may be there wives is warm blood it & not kicking all the wile a bout how cold the house is.

Rgds. to Mary.

F. A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill. Jan. 16.

**BROTHER CHARLEY.** well Charley we didnt have no more fun to Carrys party last night then over to Curtis the night they give there party & we played this here auction bridge at Carrys to & I set there & pretty near went to sleep & Carry didnt give us no beer but instead of beer they give us some thing they called punch & they was supposed to be a punch in it but I could of swum in it with out no danger of geting a red nose & the stuff they give us to eat would of been a bout enough for 1 man all to gather but when it was splitted up for 16 peopl a canery would of starved to death trying to make a meal off of it & the Carrys runs a grocery store at that so they should ought to be able to get stuff to eat without paying no hold up price for it but may be they thot if they

give us some thing to eat we wouldnt buy no groserys off of them for a day or 2.

Grace come in a little wile a go looking mad so I says whats the matter & she says nothing & I says you cant fool me so she told me a bout passing by Mrs. Carpenter & Mrs. Hamilton & she spoke to them & they didnt nether 1 of them speak to her. I guess I all ready told you who they was Charley. Mrs. Hamilton lives right next door to us & Mrs. Carpenter next to Hamiltons & there the peopl Grace called on last summer right after we moved out here & they didnt never call on her back & Mr. Hamilton was 1 of the guys that wouldnt leave us come in & dance that time we got the invatation by miss take & went down to the dance. So I says to Grace what did you speak to them for & she says she wanted to show she didnt bare them no gruge because they was probly sore on them self for not calling on her & I says well you will know better next time & I pertend it like it was a joke but I would like to get a good chanct to get back at them peopl Charley & I guess you know Im the 1 that can do it when I get the chanct.

Kindest to Mary.

FRED A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill. Jan. 25.

**DEAR** Charley. well Charley I and Grace is going to get back at them swell head Hamiltons & Carpenters and when we get threw with them there chest wont be sticking out so far and it was Graces idear only she didnt know how good it was when she sprung it and I guess when we put this over them Hamiltons & Carpenters will wisht theyd act it a little more frendily and hadent been so swelled on them self.

I will tell you how it come up and what wear going to pull off Charley & I bet youll laugh when you see what wear going to pull off on them. I layed off yest. and stayed home all day and wile we was eating our dinner Grace says some thing a bout giving a party & I says we aint got no money to throw a way on no partys & she says well if I cant give a party I cant go to no more partys because I will be a shamed of my



self going and I says Well I guess peopls been to our house as much is we been to there house & Grace says yes but they just come here uniformly & not no reglar invatation a fare and we havent gave no reglar card party with prizes and refreshmunts & I says I guess the peopl that have come here evnings have got more refreshmunts then we got to there house when they was giveing partys but she says Well I wont argue with you and if you wont give me no

a party at my house after the way they been acting so then I seen the pt. & I says theys some sence to the way your talking now and we will have a party and not ast nether the Hamiltons or Carpenters & they will feel like a dirty doose. Well Grace couldnt see it but I guess you can see it Charley and how would you & Mary feel if the peopl liveing next door to you give a swell party & you wasnt ast. You would feel like a rummy wouldnt you Charley.



money to have a party we will just half to quit going to other peopls houses and she act it like she was going to blubber so I says Well supose you give a party who would you ast to it and she says why the Carrys and the Curtis is thats had us to there house and then a few other couple that we met at them 2 partys so I says havent you forgot the Hamiltons & Carpenters & she says forgot them of corse I aint forgot them but do you think I would ast them to

So I says to Grace Well I dont care what you think but I will come thre with the money for your party if-youll promus to not ast nether the Hamiltons or the Carpenters & Grace says you can bet your life I wont so that part of it was fixed up. So then Grace says we will give a cinch party & give them a dutch lunch & we will ast the Carrys and the Curtis and the Bishops & Farrells & Grimes & counting our self that will make a even doz. & 3 tables of

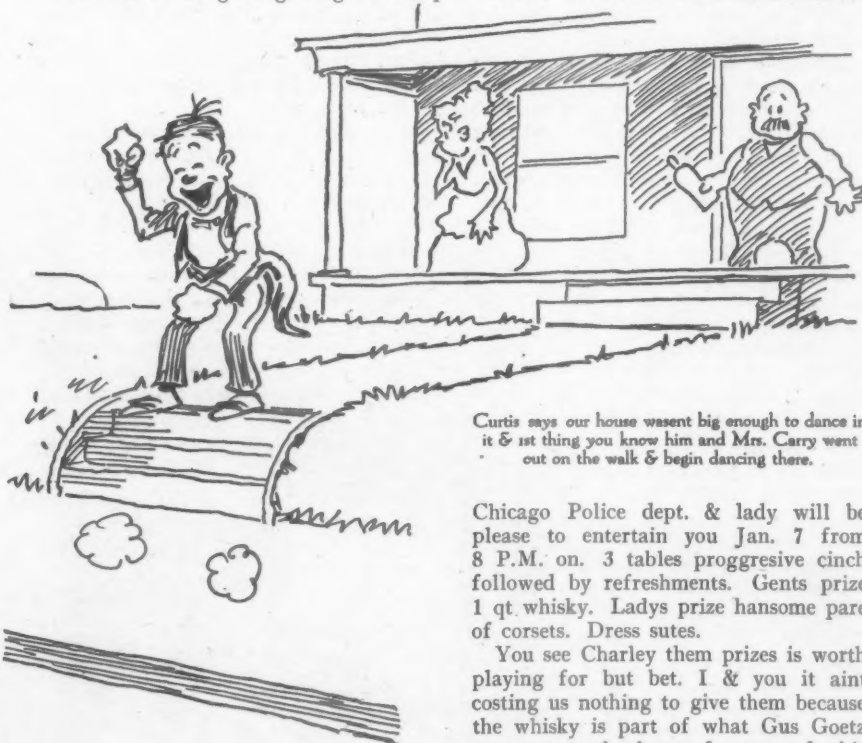


cards & I says thats all right a bout who you ast but leave me tend to the refreshmunt a speshaly the drinks & Grace says Thats all right with me because I dont care nothing a bout the drinks.

So we talked it all over & planed it all out & its going to be some party Charley & when the Hamiltons & Carpenters hears a bout it they will want to go hide in a hole some wheres. Grace was going to go at it cheap but they wouldnt be no good giveing no cheap

they wont only be 10 peopl ast besides our self & we dont want no invatation to our own party but we couldnt get 10 print it no cheaper then 12 so we will keep the extra 2 for a sveneer or may be we will male them to you & Mary because of corse you cant come but may be you will like to take a look at the invatations but in case a couple of thems spoiled so as we cant send you none heres what there going to say on them.

F. A. Gross asst. Chief of Detectives



Curtis says our house wasnt big enough to dance in it & 1st thing you know him and Mrs. Carry went out on the walk & begin dancing there.

Chicago Police dept. & lady will be please to entertain you Jan. 7 from 8 P.M. on. 3 tables proggressive cinch followed by refreshments. Gents prize 1 qt. whisky. Ladys prize hansome pare of corsets. Dress sutes.

You see Charley them prizes is worth playing for but bet. I & you it aint costing us nothing to give them because the whisky is part of what Gus Goetz sent out to the house for xmas & this is the 1st. Time he ever give me a case but other yrs. he only give me a qt. but it dont hurt him none to loosun up onct in a wile because Im in his place evry day 3 or 4 times & they dont never half to pick my pockets to get my money. and the corsets is what Mary sent to Grace 2 yrs. a go last xmas & Grace tride them on just onct & they wasnt comftible but youd sware they was just out of the store. Grace made me stick

party because if we didnt give a good 1 them swell heads wouldnt care whether they was ast or not. So when Grace seen I was willing to spend the money she says we should ought to have some invatations printed up & I says I would tend to that & we wrote out the invatation the way we wanted it fixed up and I left the order down town to day to have a doz. of them printed up & of corse we wont use the hole doz. because

in the part a bout dress sutes & I stuck it in because the peopl that comes to the party will half to past right by the Hamiltons & Carpenters house & supose they hapened to be going out that night & run in to the peopl comeing to our party they would see where the guests had on there dress sutes & that shows it aint no rummy party or no bunch of bums comeing & of corse I dont half to ware no dress sute my self because I wont half to go out because the partys right in my house.

Well Charley wear going .to have frank fortors & liver worst & slaw & potato sellid & ice cream & cake & coffee & of corse beer & you can bet I will give them enough so they wont go home dry & I will mix them up some high balls to & besides that the 1 that wins the gents prize will may be open it up before they go home & if he does I will fernish the excelsior water to make high balls out of that to. We will show them the time of there life Charley & I got it fixed up all ready with the man that runs the weakly paper out here to stick some thing in a bout the party so they wont be no chanct of the Hamiltons & Carpenters not finding out a bout it after words & I bet when they find out they will come over here on there hands and niece & make up for the way they treat it I & Grace.

I pretty near forgot to tell you a bout the peopl we got liveing next door to us not the Hamiltons but the peopl on the other side & they aint been liveing there long but moved in a little wile ago and there name is Martin. Well the night this hapened I guess they was giving a new yrs. eve party or some thing & they was making more noise then a brass band & hollering like a bunch of indians till 2 a clock in the

A. M. & Grace had a headache & couldent sleep but she wasent going to say nothing but pretty soon little Ed was woken up by them hollering next door and he was balling & they couldent none of us sleep so pretty soon I couldent stand it no longer & I slipt my over cote & sox & shoes on over my night gown & went over & rapped at the door & Mr. Martin come to the door & I says you better lay off on some of the rackit & he says what will you do if we dont & then I flashed my star on him & I says cut the noise out or youll get the worst of it & then I come a way & I guess what I said done the business because a bout a ½ hr. after words there guests went home & they wasent no more noise & next A.M. I & Mr. Martin went down on the same train to gather & I went up to him & says I was sorry to spoil his fun & he says Thats all right you didnt spoil our fun you just add it to it. So you see he is a good fellow & we would ast him to the party only him & his wife would make 14 & I & Grace would half to set out of the game & not play if they was any more peopl ast & the peopl we ast we couldent leave none of them out & we cant ast 16 peopl & have 4. tables because we aint only got 3 tables in the house. I will write & let you



I hadent no sooner opened the door then he pulled his gat on me.

know a bout our party & I bet you wisht you & Mary could be here for it.

Kindest to Mary.

FRED A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill. Feb. 1.

**BROTHER CHARLEY.** well

Charley Im so sore I cant hardley write but I want to tell you what kind of bums we got liveing next to us I mean the Hamiltons and the Carpenters that lives on the other side of the Hamiltons and before they get threw with me they will wisht they hadent of monkied with Fred Gross & I guess I dont half to tell you that they cant no body try there funny busness on me and get a way with it.

Well Charley I didnt know they was peopl in the world like them bums & if Id of knew what kind of peopl we was buying a place next to them I would of lived in a tree before I would of came here to live but you know the old saying he that laughs the last gets the best of it. Im laying low & waiting for my chanct and when it comes I wont be taking no nap.

Well Charley I guess I better tell you what come off & the papers was all full of it this A.M. & I called up the chief & says I wouldnt be down to day and he says all right & I aint sick or nothing but I know theys some bums down to head quarters that would shoot there mouth off a bout what was in the papers & I would probly get sore and shoot some body full of holes.

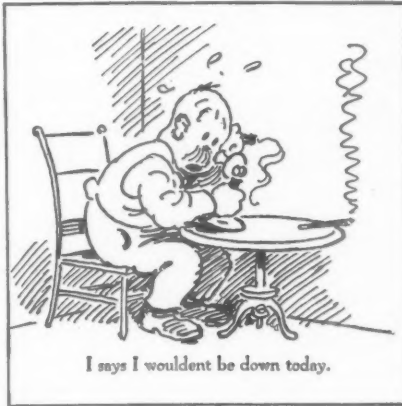
Well Charley last night was the night we give our party & of corse we knowed when we got the party up that the Hamiltons & Carpenters would get sore on acct of not geting ast to the party but we didnt in tend to leave them know nothing a bout the party a head of time but leave them read a bout it in the Alli-

son paper when it comes out next Sat. But they found out a bout it some way & of corse they was sore but insted of taking it like a man they act it like a baby or worse then that because they couldent no baby be mean enough to do what they done.

Well Charley the peopl all come that we ast & we set down & played cards a wile & evry body was haveing a pretty good time but I finely got dry & didnt see no use of waiting till the card games was over before I give the boys some thing to moisun there throtes so I went out & mixed up a few high balls & I made them pretty stiff & the gents was tickeled to death to get a hold of some thing to drink before it was time for the refreshmunts & Curtis says it taste

it like more so I mixed them up some more & 1st thing you know Curtis was throwing the cards all over the floor & he hadent only had 2 so Carry called me over to 1 side & says it wasent right to not finish Curtis up when he had such a good start so of corse then the game busted up and Grace didnt have the refresh-

munts ready yet but my part of the refreshmunts was ready so I wasent going to leave the Co. with out nothing to do so I brot in the stuff & left the gents mix up there own & after while about 4 of them cleared the tables out of the way & begin dancing & of corse we didnt have no music so Curtis pretend it like he was the orchuster & begin hollering & singing for the others to dance to & we was geting a long all O.K. but pretty noisey but no harm done till Curtis says our house wasent big enough to dance in it & 1st thing you know him & Mrs. Carry went out on the walk & begin dancing there & him singing all the wile & hollering like a wild man & pretty soon the rest of them



I says I wouldnt be down today.

was all out doors & of corse I & Grace couldnt stick in the house when they was all out side & we had to dance to keep warm because it couldnt of been more then 10 or 11 above 0 & Grace kept after me all the wile to try & get Curtis to shut up his mouth but she might is well of told me to stop the europe war & he kept it up till finely he sliped & fell down on the ice & when I & Carry tride to pick him up we sliped to & fell down & I thot we wasent never going to get up it was so slipry & then Grace says we had woke the babys up & Curtis herd her & they wasent nothing to it but he must go up stares & put them back to sleep & he hit more of the stares with his jaw then he did with his ft. & him trying to get the

babys back to sleep was a bout like as if I tride to do it by blowing the fire whistle in there ear & I & Grace had to go up & get him out of there room & wile we was up stares the door bell rung & I come down & every body was in the house again by this time so I opened up the door & there was a bum there that says he was

the night watch man & says who owns this house & I says I own it come in & have a drink & he says nothing doing & the best thing you can do is get your hat & cote on & come a long with me I says what for & he says disturbing the piece & I says who says so & he says thats none of your business so I says you bet its my business & you got to show me your warent & who sined it before I will go a long with you & that had him stoped & evry thing would of been O.K. only just then Curtis come down the stares & buted in bet. I and the oficer & told the oficer to beat it & the oficer told him to shut his mouth & then what does Curtis do but take a crack at the guy

& the guy started to pull his club & then I horned in & took it a way from him & he says Well I dont need no warent now but your arested for ressinging a oficer & I says whose going to arest me & he says you will find out so then he went a way & I thot we was threw with him & we shut the door & Curtis was ready for a nap by this time so we layed him on the sofa & Grace brot in the stuff to eat & we was laughing and joking a bout the smart aleck constable when the door bell rung again & there was the same guy & 2 others with him & I hadent no sooner opened up the door then he pulled his gat on me.

Well Charley to make it short I had to go a long with them & they wouldnt even leave me call up down town to

head quarters & get Jack & some of the boys to come out and show them whose who & they wanted Curtis to but when they seen him layed out on the sofa they past him up & I was the goat & I couldnt let on how sore I was because Grace & the rest of the women was haveing histeriks & evry thing else so I says good night to Grace & smiled



I explained the hole thing to him over the fone.

at her & the rest of the women & told them to not worry & then I went a way with the 3 guys & they locked me up.

Well Charley I didnt get no sleep because I was trying to figger out who put up the job but it come to me all of a sudden this A.M. that it was Hamilton & Carpenter & when I ast the oficer was it them he wouldnt say nothing so you see it was them & I will make them swett for it.

Well Charley I was taken up before the justice the 1st thing this A.M. & the justice was a good fellow & they wasent no body there to complane agin me only the oficer & when he found out who I realy was he wouldnt say nothing & says he was sorry he pulled

me in but it wasent his falt. So they left me go & I come home & Grace is pretty near sick because it was in the papers how we was giving a party & doing the foxey trot out in the middle of the st.

They wasent nothing in the papers a bout Curtis tho if it hadent of been for him they wouldent of never been no trouble & the next time I give a party I wont ast no sucker like him that wants to immitate the banda Roma the minut he gets 2 drinks under his belt only I wont give no more partys for no body & the next time any body says the word party to me I will bust a platter over there bean.

Of corse they aint no danger of the chief laying me off or doing nothing because I explained the hole thing to him over the phone this A.M. But you can bet Hamilton & Carpenter would of got my job if they could & it aint there falt they didnt.

Well Ive wrote you a long letter Charley but I guess I had some news for you even if it was bad news but the next bad news will be a bout them stiffs that pulled it off.

Kindest to Mary.

FRED A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill. Feb. 4.

**BROTHER CHARLEY.** well Charley you know the old saying a bout the 1 that laughs the last gets the best of it & the day after tomorrow I will be the 1 thats laughing & Hamilton & Carpenter will wisht they was in a hole some wheres hideing & they will find out that they aint no body cant put nothing over on Fred Gross & get any thing but the worst of it. I got evry thing fixed up & I aint said nothing to Grace or no body else a bout it accept Bob Barnes & I guess you know who he is Charley or if you dont you should ought to. Hes the sherrif of Cook Co. Charley & they aint nothing I could ast him to do for me that he wouldent do on acct of what I done for him wile he was runing for sherrif.

Well Charley I will half to tell you whats coming off & how I got the tip to pull off what Im going to pull off on them. The little irish girl that stays

with the babys evnings some times was here Sun. & her & Grace was talking & the girl knows the girl that works for the Hamiltons next door to us & the Hamiltons higher girl told this little girl a bout Mrs. Hamilton bellonging to a auction bridge whist club that meets evry Thurs. P.M. & insted of playing for a regular prize like a pare of silk stockings or some thing they all stick in a \$1.00 a peace & theys a bout 12 of them in the club & the 1 that wins the prize takes the \$12.00 dollars in cash money & Mrs. Carpenters 1 of the club. Well Charley there going to meet the day after tomorrow to Hamiltons house & may be you guest all ready whats coming off.

Well Charley I got the idear Sun. night after I was in bed & when I come down town yest. A.M. I went up in the county bldg & seen Bob & ast him would he do me a faver & he says any thing but lone me some money but he was jokeing Charley & he would lone me money to if I ast him but I says No I didnt want to borry no money & then I told him what I wanted. Well Charley I guess you know whats coming off. When them swell society dames is haveing there little auction bridge whist game I of the deputy sherrifs is going to walk in on them & make a pinch see Charley. I guess thats a bad idear eh Charley. Of corse Bob couldnt come out & make the pinch him self because it would put him in bad but hes going to give the job to a deputy name Parker thats no good & Bobs trying to get rid of him any way & if theys any trubble comes up Parker will be the bird elect it to face the music.

Well Charley I guess thats a poor idear & I guess that will make some story for the Chi papers & they wont be no chancet of them not hearing a bout it eh Charley. I will see to that.

Well Charley I told you I would get back at these birds & make them wisht they had of layed off of me & before Im threw with them they will be cralling on there hands & niece but I guess you under stand Charley that I aint trying to do no more then just scare them & of corse the women wont be pulled in or nothing like that but just

a pinch & a little story in the papers. Thats a plenty eh Charley.

Dont say nothing to Mary a bout it Charley because she might spill some thing a bout it to Grace in a letter & I aint sure yet that Im going to tell Grace.

F. A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill. Feb. 7.

**B**ROTHER CHARLEY, well Charley the deeds done & its all over & they was a story in the papers this A.M. that would knock you dead & Im going to buy up some extra coppys of the papers & send you some of them & you will see if I fixed them swell heads or not only it came near being a bad mix up on acct of this bone head deputy Parker that Bob sent out to make the pinch. He pored a few glassis of currage down his throte before he went on the job & when he got ready to work he was all lit up like a church & went up & pound it on Hamiltons front door & when the higher girl opened up the door he pulled his gun and she shreeked & pretty near fainted & then Mrs. Hamilton come runing to the door & she must be a pretty game bird Charley because she looked the gat right in the face & ast Parker what he wanted & he showed her his star & says the place was pinched & she says what for & he told her for being a gambleing house & she ast him was it a joke or some thing & he says no & she ast to see his warent & he says he didnt need no warent because he come under orders from the sherrif & then she told him to come & set down & he come in jugling the gun a round in his hand & 3 or 4 more of the women pretty near fell dead & it would of been just like him to take a shot at them but Mrs. Hamilton finely got the other women cammed down & told Parker to have a seat & then she called her husband up in town & he called the sherrifs ofice & got a hold of Bob on the

wire & of corse Bob told him it must be some miss take so Hamilton got Bob to call up & talk to Parker & Bob told Parker to leave the women a lone & come back to head quarters & Parker didnt know what to think but he beat it out of Hamiltons house & back to town & thats all they was to it. But of corse some body called up the diffrunt papers & give them the story a bout a deputy sherrif radeing a swell gambleing joint in Allison & I bet the Hamiltons & Carpenters would of gave there right eye to not have that stuff in the papers.

Well Charley dont say nothing to Mary because I aint going to tell Grace & I havent told no body only you & Bob Barnes of corse & no body else accept this here Martin that moved in next door to us on the left & may be I told you a bout him making so much noise new yrs. eve that I had to go over & tell them to shut up but he was all right a bout it & didnt get sore but I & him was seting next to each other going in to town on the train this A.M. & he seen me reading the peace in the papers a bout the pinch at Hamiltons & I guess he seen me laughing & he ast me what the laugh was a bout & so I ast him if he could keep a secrit & he says sure so I told him all a bout it & why I done it & when I got threw teling him he layed back in his seat & pretty near busted laughing & I says to him You know the old saying a bout the 1 that laughs the last gets the best of it & he says Thats me & he was laughing so loud that he drowned out the train.

Well Charley I bet it wont be long before I will be writing to tell you a bout them swell heads comeing over to call on Grace & they will know better after this then to put on heirs in front of peopl thats just as good is them and a hole lot better.

Kindest to Mary.

FRED A. GROSS.



**There will be another Ring Lardner story in an early issue.**





# possum San

*A story of a tiny Japanese maid, and the big, ugly American who could accomplish wonders.*

By Frank R. Adams

Author of "Monsieur Butterfly," etc.

DECORATIONS BY GRANT T. REYNARD

**J**IM WELDING and his wife—who was already beginning to forget that only six weeks ago she was Margery Summers, over in America—waited in the tea-rooms of the New Hotel Royal in Tokyo, in the expectant attitude of children who are going to be amused.

Their entire stay in Tokyo had been a constant inquiry of "What shall we do next?" The question was usually answered by Jim's old friend, Charley Abel, who was local manager for the Oriental Export Company, which did a thriving business in hand-made gods, antique embroidery, kimonos, mandarin coats, dinner-gongs—and all that sort of thing which is sold at auction in America year in and year out for prices, if we are to

believe the auctioneers, below the cost of freighting.

Abel had promised to dig up something interesting for them that evening. He did not tell them what it was to be, and they waited expectantly.

At length he arrived.

"Great news," he announced, selecting a blossom from the table bouquet and placing it carefully in his button-hole. "We are going to take in an honest-to-goodness high-class Japanese wedding to-night. It wouldn't have been possible, except that the girl in the case is wealthy and is a sort of a ward of a friend of mine, an American, by the way, that I got acquainted with over at the offices of the Universal Typewriter Company here in Tokyo."





"It sounds interesting," interpolated Jim. "The girl is a ward, you say? Do you mean to tell me that an American man was appointed guardian for a wealthy Japanese girl?"

Charley laughed shortly. "Opossum San was no heiress when John Thorne found her," he said. "She was a little crippled outcast from a Geisha school in the Shin Yoshiwara."

"A cripple!" echoed Margery, with instant sympathy.

"Yes. This had ruined her forever as a dancing girl in the eyes of the instructor, and as no one knew who her parents were, they turned her out to fend for herself. She was only a kid of nine or ten when John found her limping along through the poorest part of the native quarter, dragging a broken red umbrella and trying not to cry.

"He was attracted to her as much as anything by the fact that he is a cripple himself. There has always been something the matter with one of his feet, and he is terribly sensitive about it. That is really one of the reasons why he has buried himself over here instead of taking the place he would be rightfully entitled to in New York. . . . Anyway, he picked the kid up and made her tell him her story. When he found out that she had no home, he fixed her up with lodgings for the night at his own little house. How she came to stay, nobody knows. At any rate, she just naturally adopted herself to him, and almost before he knew it, he found that she was running his household and taking care of him as if she were thirty and

he were ten, instead of their ages being reversed.

"It was a good thing for Jack, at that. It gave him something to hang onto in life. I don't believe he had much before. He taught her English himself, and had governesses and tutors take care of her higher education. As he said, he had scads of money and no one to spend it on but her."

"Is she a Christian?" interjected Margery.

Charley Abel smiled.

"Well—" He hesitated. "I think she has read the Bible, but I doubt whether she believes there is any god except John Thorne."

On the way to the native quarter where Thorne lived, Margery was full of questions about the little bride.

"How does it come," she asked, as they jogged over the Sumida River in jinrikishas, "that a high-class Japanese would marry a girl who is, to say the least, of unknown antecedents?"

"The Japanese are a thrifty race," said their guide, by way of explanation, "and it is just possible that Opossum San's dowry had something to do with it."

"Oh," murmured Margery, half in sympathy and half in indignation. "I think it is a shame. She can't possibly be happy with a husband who marries her just for her money. And she is a cripple, too."

"Oh, but she isn't," Charley Abel hastily assured her. "I guess I forgot to mention it, but a year ago there was a famous German surgeon visiting here



on his vacation. John Thorpe had him examine Opossum San, and then simply forced him to operate on her and straighten out her injured thigh. She can walk as well as anybody now. You can see for yourself, because here we are."

He helped Margery out of her jinrikisha and up the path, through a crowd of gayly clad Japanese, to an unusually imposing house that stood ablaze with light in the center of the lantern-lighted garden. The *shoji* were pushed aside, and servants streamed in and out, carrying refreshments.

Charley Abel led the way inside, followed by the slightly bewildered and abashed young lady and her husband.

"Jack, I want to present you to Mrs. Welding," he said, as he stood before an old-young man of thirty-five or -six who was directing the scurrying of the army of soft-footed servants. "Mrs. Welding, my friend Mr. Thorne."

"How do you do?" Thorne said, smiling.

Margery noticed that his smile quite changed his face, which otherwise impressed her as being repulsively ugly. His head was far too large for a body that seemed a rather discouraged sort of framework even when he stood still. When he took a step, its inefficiency was painfully evident. He limped unmistakably, and his shoulders had the pathetic droop of a man who meets the world with a handicap. But his smile—

"Thank you so much for letting us come to the wedding," Margery was saying conventionally.

"Not at all," the man responded, wincing a little. "Thank Opossum San, who is coming down the stairs now. She wanted you to come because you are friends of Charley Abel, and she has always been grateful to him because he taught her to swear in English."

This he said perfectly soberly as a tiny young person came grandly down the stairs, arrayed in the costliest of silks so heavily brocaded that it was nearly impossible for her to walk in them.

Margery gave a gasp of astonishment and admiration. The girl was so small and so perfect it seemed to Margery as if she were looking upon a masterpiece by some painter of miniatures, or even more, as if she were looking at a full-sized beautiful woman through the wrong end of a telescope.

"Mrs. Welding," said Mr. Thorne formally, "this is Opossum San."

The girl extended a tiny hand, American fashion.

"Pardon me for staring," said Margery, "but you are too beautiful for anything."

"You must never tell me that," said Opossum San demurely. "My Honorable Jack Thorne forbids that anyone should tell me that I am beautiful. Of course I know it myself," she added naively, laughing impudently at the man, "but everybody here obeys him except me."

"Opossum San," suggested her guardian kindly, "you may show the Honorable Mrs. Welding through our miserable dwelling-place that her august feet have deigned to enter."

"Yes, Honorable Jack Thorne," she acquiesced obediently, but with a twinkle in her eye as she kow-towed mockingly to him. "It shall be as you wish."

She led the way back up the stairs she had just descended.

"Not many of the real Japanese homes have upper stories," she commented in passing. "Mr. Thorne, however, has incorporated a great many American ideas into his house."

"Pardon me, Miss Opossum San," interposed Margery curiously, "but why do you speak a different sort of English now than you did when you were with your guardian?"

"Oh," explained the little Japanese girl, "I ordinarily use the same sort of English that you do. I learned it from my governess. But when I am with Mr. Thorne, I speak the way we used to when I had no one to teach me but him. I suppose it is a sort of baby talk. You know I was quite small when he first took me to live with him."

Margery looked at her diminutive bulk and laughed. "You're not very large now, you know."

"Oh, yes," Opossum San assured her soberly. "I am quite grown up now. Why, this is my wedding night." She stated the fact more to herself than to the girl of an alien race who stood beside her.

At the top of the stairs she paused, as if to speak further about her wed-

ding, but apparently changed her mind.

"This," she said abruptly, "is my old story-book room."

She slid back a paper door, the only one in the entire house that was closed. The tiny room that they entered was softly lit, however, by several shaded lamps of Japanese design with electric bulbs concealed in them. There was little furniture save two huge chests, but the walls were profusely decorated in many colors with pictures of storks, monkeys, cats, dragons, fish and human beings as conceived by the mind of a Japanese artist.

"It was here that the Honorable Jack Thorne used to play with me sometimes when I was little," she said. "And when I got tired, he'd hold me in his arms and tell me stories until I fell asleep. He had the pictures painted on the walls to help his memory, he said—to remind him of the stories I liked best. This picture is of *Little Red Riding Hood*, who killed the wolf and had him made up into a rug to sleep on."

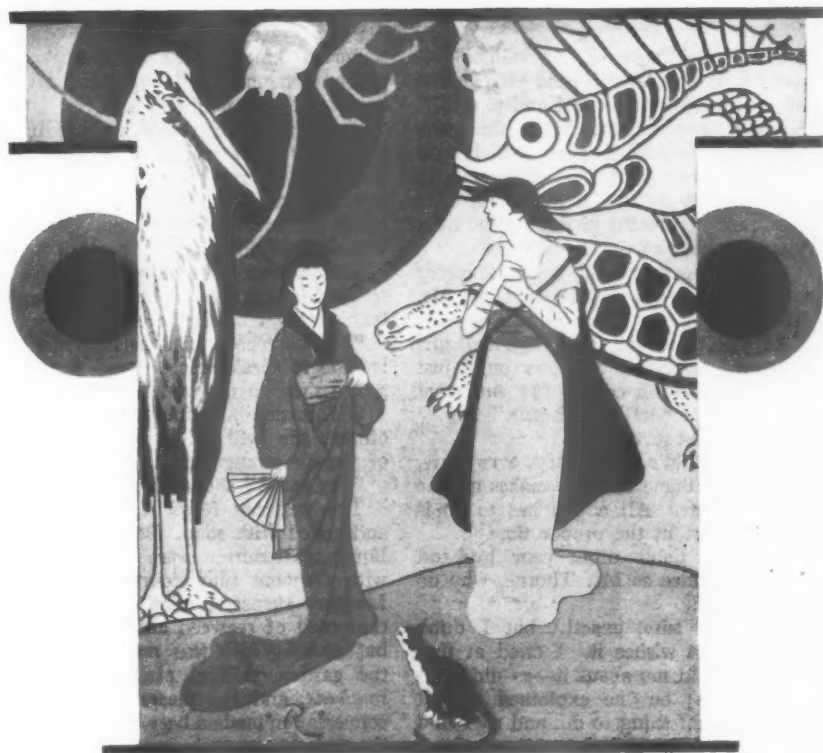
"But," objected Margery, "it was the other way around. The wolf killed *Little Red Riding Hood* and ate her up."

"Oh," said Opossum San, a pained look in her eyes. "That was the way he told it first, but when I cried, he changed it around. The Honorable Jack Thorne is very obliging about changing things. The first thing he did after he got me was to change my name. I used to be called Wild Cherry Bud, but he changed it to Opossum San, which is much nicer and fits a lot better, he says, especially if you've seen the way I sleep."

A great calico cat, finding the door unexpectedly open, strolled in to investigate and rubbed himself affectionately against Opossum San's brocaded robe.

"This is Kaleidoscope San," said the girl gravely. "His other name is Kitty, but we call him Kaleidoscope San when we want to please him very much. Mr. Thorne named him that because he has so many colors and looks different every time you see him. That's because there are so many disagreeable cats in the neighborhood who don't seem to appreciate his peaceful disposition."

"Are you going to take Kaleidoscope



San with you to your new home?" inquired the American girl idly.

"Oh no," she assured her quickly. "I should like to, but Kaleidoscope San and I are all the family that Mr. Thorne has. He found us both in the street, but he is very fond of us, just the same, and it wouldn't be fair for both of us to go away at the same time. We talked it all over, Kaleidoscope San and I, and we decided that he had better stay. I'm going to come back and play with him sometimes, so he won't miss me too much."

"This is a very pleasant room for a playroom," ventured Margery because she felt she was expected to say something, "but—" She halted awkwardly.

"You wonder what I had to play with," supplied the Oriental sister with a slight laugh. "My toys and books are all in here." She tapped one of the great chests. "And in that other one over there are all the funny little clothes I used to wear."

She lifted the lid of the first box and took out, one at a time, the marvelous toys that had been bestowed upon her by her benefactor. He had apparently purchased his gifts with imagination as well as money. There was a cerise-colored giraffe that stalked across the floor if you wound him up, and a railway train that surely was made in America. He had played with that mostly himself, Opossum San explained. Then there were tops, marvelous ones with curious paintings on them; feather toys that you kept in the air with a fan; and pigs and dragons that you blew up and hung from the ceiling in the breeze from an open window.

Then there were books, all lovingly dog-eared and worn, fairy tales, Japanese and English; and nursery rhymes, hand colored by an artist apparently afflicted with color-blindness and the St. Vitus dance.

"This is my First Reader," Opossum

San said, holding up a thin volume gingerly by the corner. "Herein Mr. Thorne himself taught me to read and to spell." She opened the book. "See; this page is where I learned to spell *cat*. It's all wrinkly where I cried on it because he wouldn't let me use a *k*. He had to spank me before I'd give in." She dimpled adorably at the recollection.

"Your new husband," began Margery tentatively, "—is he as nice as Mr. Thorne?"

"I don't know," the Japanese girl answered soberly. "I have only just met him, but of course I'm sure that he isn't as nice as Mr. Thorne."

"Only just met him!"

"Yes. That's customary over here, you know. Some one else makes all the arrangements. All a girl has to do is just be there at the proper time."

"If you don't think your husband will be as nice as Mr. Thorne, why do you marry?"

"I'm not sure, exactly, but I think Mr. Thorne wishes it. I cried at first when he told me about it—so did he—I saw him; but he explained that it was the right thing to do, and so I said 'All right,' because I always try to please Mr. Thorne."

A softly vibrating gong interrupted their conversation.

"That means what?" the American asked.

"The wedding feast," answered the girl.

They went out into the hall. On the upper veranda, which was visible from the top of the stairs, a half-dozen men and women were busily getting down on their knees and getting up again, voicing meanwhile vociferous eloquence.

"What is it?" Margery was astonished, and a little frightened.

"They're just praying," explained Opossum San with a giggle.

"Praying! What for?"

"For me."

"Oh, pardon me. They are relatives of yours, I suppose."

"No." The girl started down the stairs. "I haven't any relatives. We just hire them to do it. Usually just one or two people are enough to pray for an ordinary wedding, but Mr. Thorne is

so good to me that he got a lot." She paused a moment. "I ought to be very happy, but I'm not," she said.

She hurried downstairs as rapidly as her heavy dress would permit and led her guest unerringly to where, on the lawn, a table was set for the bridal party. There she found her guardian with Mr. Welding and Mr. Abel.

She went up to Mr. Thorne and spoke to him in Japanese. As she did so, a tear started from her eye.

"No, no," he replied in English. "It is rude to speak before guests in a language they do not understand."

She turned a brimming eye to the others; she held childishly to the hand of the old-young man.

"I'm sorry," she apologized.

The wedding feast began with soup and ended with soup. Between the two liquid extremities were many things, with frequent soup courses thrown in. Margery suspected that one salad was composed of seaweed and printer's ink, but nothing else was recognizable. In the garden, skillful players thrummed *samisens*, and the pleasant murmur of conversation made a bass background for the melody.

Margery had plenty of time to look around the table to where her own husband was swapping college reminiscences with Charley Abel, and Opossum San was diligently trying to please an old, bald-headed man with gray whiskers, who Margery conjectured was going to be her father-in-law.

At length she turned to Mr. Thorne, who sat at her left.

"Why don't you marry her yourself?" she asked suddenly.

He started and flushed painfully.

"Marry Opossum San?" he questioned.

"Yes. You love her, don't you?"

"Yes," he replied simply. "But I have had her for six years. Six years of Opossum San is all that one person can reasonably expect of the gods." He laughed lightly. "She thinks I'm an old man. I am, for that matter—twenty years older than she. I don't deny what you have guessed, because you are too clever for me to hope to deceive, but I assure you that I am making the best arrangement for her future happiness."



"How about your own?"

"That is not to be considered." His courtesy to the girl who was probing his heart, albeit sympathetically, was unruffled. "Ever since I first started to take care of her, I've tried to do the right thing for her, even when she did not know it was for her own good. The same is true of this. Initogo, her husband-to-be, is a brilliant young man who stands high with the Government, and they will be well suited to each other. I have made investigations as to his character, and in the Japanese fashion he is above reproach."

"Still you fail to convince me," persisted Margery.

He turned toward her a haggard face, the real countenance that he had been hiding behind the mask of conventional hospitality.

"Can't you see why?" he demanded. "Must I tell you the real reason? I am a cripple. My face is ugly. I have been repulsed too often to ever offer even my friendship to a woman again." He subsided suddenly. "Pardon my outburst. Your suggestion woke a sleeping dog."

"I'm sorry." Margery patted his knuckles gently with her palm. "After all, Opossum San did not repulse you when you first took her into your home."

"No, but then she was a cripple herself, and outcast. She had no place to go except to me. Now she is beautiful—I who long for beauty have made her so myself. I can do nothing more for her."

The meal came to an end. The priests took their position on the veranda, and the bridal couple, with their relatives and mercenary prayer-offerers, came before them.

The *samisens* hushed for a moment; the servants ceased their rushing to and fro; the moon stood still in the sky and in the tiny placid lake where it was reflected so brilliantly; and then they were married, Opossum San and Initogo, the brilliant young man who stood high in the eye of the Government.

Margery Welding went from the ceremony with a choked feeling, as if there were something she ought to have done

but hadn't. It stayed with her all through the night and kept her and her husband awake—him because she felt the need of talking to some one about it, and he had not yet acquired the married man's trick of sleeping while pretending to listen. After dawn they at last slumbered.

In consequence of the wakeful night, it was afternoon before they had breakfast. As soon as that was over, Margery abandoned her husband to a game of billiards and went out on a solo shopping tour, so she said. Upon leaving the hotel, however, she gave the 'rikishaman Charley Abel's business address, and burst in upon that astonished young man in the midst of dictating an important letter to the firm's chief customer in bronze gods.

"Where's Jim?" he questioned, instantly suspecting that she had lost her way and her husband in the crowded streets of the city.

"He's at the hotel where I left him," she replied. "I came to you to see if you knew Miss Opossum San's new address—where her husband lives, I mean. Do you know it?"

"Why yes, I happen to," Charley Abel said slowly; then he asked with sudden suspicion, "What do you want it for?"

Margery hesitated a moment, then lied glibly: "I bought a little wedding-present for her, and I wanted to know where to send it, that's all."

"Oh." The young man's doubts melted away, and he reached over on his desk for a card-index. He found the address and gave it to her.

It was not difficult to find, that new address of Opossum San's, but it took an infinite amount of courage for the American girl to make up her mind to enter when her jinrikisha stopped before the outer gate. After all, what excuse could she make for her intrusion on a person who was a mere acquaintance? Maybe the girl would not even remember her. Something drove her on, and she went in. By some miracle of chance, the gate was unlocked and opened at her touch.

The gardens were very pleasant and were laid out with devious paths bordered by shrubbery. It was because of



the heavy planting that Margery did not see, until she had nearly reached the house, that a tiny figure in a scarlet kimono embroidered with storks was stretched out face downward on the bank of the tiny pool that gave a brave imitation of a lake beneath some sort of a blossoming tree.

Her heart stood still an instant. Had she been drawn to this spot only to gaze on the lifeless body of the little Japanese girl?

All at once the figure on the grass shuddered slightly, as if with a long sigh, and the tension relaxed. Margery approached her and laid a gentle hand on her shoulder.

The Japanese girl did not move.

"Opossum San," said Margery softly, "it is Mrs. Welding."

"Oh," Opossum San, driven by politeness, wrenched herself away from her private grief and rose from the grass, turning tearless but burning eyes toward the other woman.

Margery held out her arms. The little girl looked at them suspiciously a moment and then flung herself into their embrace and began to sob convulsively on Margery's shoulder.

"What's the matter, dear?" murmured Margery in conventionally soothing tones. "Just have a good cry, and then maybe you'll feel better if you tell some one all about it. I had a funny impulse to come and see you, and I'm awfully glad I did it."

Opossum San, who belonged to a race that almost never weeps, was for that reason all the more torn by the unaccustomed outlet of emotion. At length, however, she quieted down.

"Can you tell me about it now, dear?"

"There isn't anything to tell," the girl whimpered brokenly. "I was just thinking of my beautiful Jack Thorne."

"Beautiful?" Margery laughed a little. "He isn't exactly that."

"But he is," Opossum San insisted. "And what's worse, he grows more beautiful every minute. I knew he was when I went away last night, but now," she looked up pathetically,—"now it's tomorrow and I've lost him forever."

"Look here," said Margery sharply, shaking the youngster; "do you mean to

tell me that you are in love with Mr. Thorne and still you married this other man?"

"Why, yes,"—this wonderingly. "What else could I do? Mr. Thorne told me to."

"Does he know that you love him that way?"

"Of course not."

"Thank Heaven for that."

"Why?"

"Because he's eating his heart out for you anyway; but if he knew that you cared too, it would kill him."

"You mean," faltered Opossum San, "you think that my beautiful Jack Thorne could—?"

Margery nodded.

"And he told me he was never going to marry. I asked him once when he first told me about Mr. Initogo. What shall I do?"

Margery Welding belonged to the modern race of women. By that is meant that she did not sit idly by, as her mother would have done, and deplore the fact that something was decayed in the government of Denmark. To the nineteen-hundred-and-fifteen model of womankind, the existence of a wrong means setting machinery in motion to better it. Sometimes she is not as wise as she is strenuous, but you have to admit that things happen. Therefore Opossum San's pitiful query, "What shall I do?" did not fall on deaf ears. Margery promptly decided what the other girl should do, and in spite of outraged convention and law she proceeded to put her plan into effect.

She was a trifle flushed from her exertions when she returned to the New Hotel Royal, where her recently acquired husband was being dissuaded with difficulty from calling up the police about her. It took the combined efforts of Charley Abel and John Thorne to reassure him as to his wife's safety. The two men had come to dine with the Weldings and had arrived before Margery got back to the hotel. She met them all in the lobby.

"Of course I'm all right," she replied, unfeelingly, to Jim's reproaches. Then she hurried on to the subject that was next to her heart: "Does anyone

here know anything about the laws governing divorce and annulment of marriage in this country?"

Charley Abel spoke up after a moment of stunned silence: "Personally, I do not, but Jack Thorne is up on Japanese laws because he helped when they were remodeling some of them."

She turned to the sad-eyed man who seemed not to be paying much attention.

"Why yes, I know something about legal procedure," he said. "What did you want to know? I hope you are not in any trouble?"

"Oh no," said Margery airily. "I'm not in any trouble. And I don't want to know anything about the law personally. I just wanted to be sure you knew."

"Look here, Margery," commanded her husband, "explain yourself."

"I can't, but Mr. Thorne will understand if he will decline our invitation and go straight home."

Mr. Thorne did not understand, but he had his suspicions, and consternation and hope were writ confusingly over his countenance as he hastily took his leave without asking any further questions.

It was dusk as he hurried across the native quarter, and the deep velvet darkness of a moonless night had fallen before he reached his own street.

At his gate he paused, afraid to enter for fear his wildest suspicion might not be true. At last he took a deep breath and went in, limping hastily up the path to the house that stood dark at the top of the little hill. He had allowed



the servants to go and had locked up the place before he left.

Outside the portal he fumbled with the lock that futilely fastened the paper door. His trembling hand failed to make the connection between key and lock in the dark, and finally he lighted a match in order to see.

An exclamation of surprise escaped him. The *shoji*, or paper-covered sliding door, had a great hole in the middle of it. It reminded him of nothing so much as a circus-hoop that an equestrian has jumped through.

Filled with misgiving, he entered the dark, silent house and turned on the lights. There was no one on the lower floor and nothing had been disturbed.

He climbed the stairs. All the doors stood open save one. He glanced hastily in each of the chambers. All were tenantless. He laid his hand on the door of the story-book room and reluctantly pushed it aside. What if no one were there?

It was dark, but he did not turn on the light. He did not need to. He knew who was in the room.

"Come here, Opossum San," he said.

There was no reply. He waited.

"Come here," he repeated.

After a silence a voice said truculently, "What are you going to do with miserable me, Honorable Jack Thorne?"

He laughed. "God only knows. You'll have to take a chance."

Suddenly he was overwhelmed by a tiny silky bundle that flung itself into his arms.

After she had settled herself comfortably against his shoulder, she said, "I've brought me home."

"I noticed that as soon as I saw our front door," he grinned. "I knew that it was either you or a sixteen-inch shell. Why did you do it?"



"Because," — and she paused to think up a reason, — "because I've found out that Opossum San doesn't love anybody in all the world but her own darling Jack Thorne."

He stiffened suddenly. That this should come to him too late!

"I know," she went on apologetically, "that a perfectly nice lady never ought to tell a gentleman that she loves him, but I'm not a lady any more. Mrs. Welding, she taught me to be a suffragette."

John Thorne gently disentangled himself from the tiny Japanese Pankhurst and held her at arm's-length as one would a kitten.

"This isn't right," he said with a sigh. "It's too late, Opossum San. If I had known yesterday. . . . But even now I don't know what we can say to your husband to explain why you have been away as long as this. We must hurry back to him."

"No, no," she protested wildly. "Don't make me go back there. We can send some one else to let him out."

"Let him out!" the man repeated, startled. "Let him out of what?"

"Out of the little stone pagoda in his garden," she explained, as a matter of course. "I locked him in just for fun when we came home from the wedding last night—you know, just the way I shut you in my story-book room once

because you'd been bad. But my husband doesn't care for jokes, and he got so mad I was afraid to let him out. I waited all night for him to quiet down, but when he did he went to sleep. I guess he drank too much rice wine, maybe."

Midway in her narrative the man had chuckled; later he had laughed; and finally he had drawn her close to him and held her as if against the world.

"And then what?" he asked, as she paused in her story.

"And then I found out that I and my darling Jack Thorne loved each other better than anything else in the world." She pushed away from him suddenly. "You do, don't you?" she demanded.

"Yes," he admitted.

"So I came home."

"But what can we do?"

"You said 'we,' didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Then it's all right. You can get me a divorce—"

"Get you a divorce!"

"Mrs. Welding said you could. Please, darling Jack Thorne, won't you get me a divorce—just one little weenie one?"

He was silent awhile. She tugged at his coat collar. "If you get me a divorce this time, I'll promise never to ask for another. Will you?"

He drew a long breath. "I'll try. What if I do? What then?"

"Then you can think up some other ending, just as you did for the story about *Little Red Riding Hood*."

After a pause devoted to crowded silence, she reached up and touched his face gently, as if to remind him that she was there.

"But don't you think up another ending now," she begged, "because I've been waiting for you such a very long time."

What is the secret of happiness in marriage? Do you—does anyone—know? You may find your answer in

### "Doors That Never Open Again"

BY WALTER JONES

in the August Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands, July 23rd.

## A Complete Résumé of the Preceding Chapters of "THE ISLAND OF SURPRISE"

**R**OBERT LOVELL, son of Godfrey Lovell, a Wall Street capitalist, employs Dorothy Arden, his father's secretary, to take the dictation of his first novel. She is a beautiful girl, whose father went bankrupt in a contest with Godfrey Lovell in "the Street." As the novel progresses, it becomes apparent that young Lovell is modeling his heroine from her, and his hero from himself. Unconsciously he is making love to her in writing the book.

On the day the last of the story is dictated, Miss Arden, swept from her usual reserve, shows she is in love with the young writer. He believes there is an answering love in his heart. Miss Arden slips on a rug and is stunned by the fall. When she recovers, she is in Lovell's arms.

Miss Arden tells Lovell that his father had planned to marry him to Dorothy Cassilis, daughter of a Chicago financier. Robert, in a burst of resentment, decides that he and Miss Arden shall be married at once, and the ceremony is performed.

They return to the office to find that Godfrey Lovell has suffered a stroke which will necessitate his giving up all business. His physician orders him to take a South Seas cruise in his yacht.

Godfrey Lovell sends Robert to Chicago to complete a deal with Daniel Cassilis. He goes reluctantly. His father joins him in Chicago, en route to San Francisco, to board the yacht, and insists on the son's accompanying him on the cruise. Robert makes a hurried trip to New York to see his wife, but finds she is gone from her apartment. The only clue to her whereabouts is the fragments of a telegram which, when pieced together, make only the words: "Can't do without....need you....take first train....meet me."

Young Lovell is stunned. He decides to engage detectives in Chicago, and on his return from the cruise, to find the man who sent that telegram to his wife and settle with him.

Although he smarts under the supposed deception of his wife, he allows himself to admire another young woman on his train. A wreck precipitates her into his arms, and he finds her to be Dorothy Cassilis. Lovell persuades her to go on the cruise, and so they make the trip west in each other's society, enjoying themselves to the utmost.

At San Francisco they find Dorothy Arden aboard the yacht, as it was

Godfrey Lovell's telegram that her young husband had found in her room. Her letters to Robert had been delayed, and now she knows of his lover-like attentions to Dorothy Cassilis. She meets him with scorn; and in her resentment she gives all of her attention to Dr. Elverson, Godfrey Lovell's physician. Lovell is furious and pays devoted court to Dorothy Cassilis.

**M**ISS ARDEN discovers Lovell and Miss Cassilis on deck one night just as Miss Cassilis is telling Lovell she loves him. Miss Arden demands to know what relation Lovell and Miss Cassilis bear to each other. Miss Cassilis is furious, and Lovell discovers he has put himself in a position where he must be shamed in both women's eyes when Miss Cassilis knows of his marriage.

The next day Miss Arden is compelled to chaperon Miss Cassilis and Lovell while they explore a South Sea island. A tempest comes up before the explorers can reach the yacht, which puts out to sea for safety. In their rush to reach the ship, they fall over a cliff. Lovell suffers a wound on the head. When he regains consciousness, Miss Arden has told Miss Cassilis that she is Lovell's wife. Miss Cassilis, thinking it an untruth, retorts that *she* is his wife. Miss Arden appeals to Lovell, and he, having lost his memory, tells them he doesn't know either of them.

The yacht does not return. In their extremity Miss Arden takes command—finds food, builds a shelter, superintends nursing Lovell. No gleam of the truth comes to Lovell. Six years have dropped from his memory.

After a month, Lovell is much attracted to both women. Each continues to insist she is his wife. So Lovell decides to test them out.

First he becomes impassioned with Miss Arden. She allows his kiss, thinking his memory has returned. But her questions about their marriage show her he is deceiving her, and she leaves him in disgust. Within the hour he tries kissing Miss Cassilis and says he remembers his marriage with her. She knows he must be lying and tries to free herself from his embrace, but he will not let her go. Her screams for help bring Miss Arden with Lovell's pistol, and when Miss Arden sees what is happening, her loathing boils. She commands Lovell to release Miss Cassilis or she will shoot. Lovell breaks away, and Miss Arden helps Miss Cassilis to their cave.



# The Island of Surprise

By Cyrus  
Townsend  
Brady

*A new novel by the author of "The Island of Regeneration," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER TITTLE

## CHAPTER XXIII

### OUT OF THE DEEPS

**L**OVELL plunged down through the bushes until he got to the niche in the sand. He had told the truth to one woman and lost her; he had lied to another and lost her. The stronger, more nobly planned woman had received his love with scorn, although he could swear that Dorothy Arden loved him. The kinder, gentler one had responded in exactly the same way, although again he could swear that Dorothy Cassilis loved him. The consciousness that he had been so humiliated, both by himself and by them, plunged him into the very depths of shame.

He sat down by the side of the water and looked out to sea. Perhaps the best thing he could do was to plunge in and swim out and out until— No, not all the waters of the ocean could wash him clean. No, in spite of the travail of his soul, his better nature told him he must live for these women. He must expiate his conduct. He could not die for them yet. It was not necessary. He would reestablish himself in their good graces. He would crush the devil that had obsessed him.

Out of the deep of sorrow and shame and despair he called upon God. He went back into the niche. He threw himself down on the sand; instinctively he hid his burning face in his hands and prayed that he might be forgiven, even though he had scarcely known what he had done. He besought the Lord that he might once more see trust and love in

the eyes of Dorothy Arden, and respect, at least, in the eyes of Dorothy Cassilis.

The sun went down on three of the most unhappy people in the world. Marooned though they were, on this deserted island, far from the ignoble strife of the crowd, the same miseries that have torn the bosoms of mankind since time and the world began found lodgment in their breasts. The strange madness which had infected the brain of the man had passed, though the women did not know it. More like his normal self, he continued to dwell upon his actions with the horror they merited. He searched fiercely in his mind for some method whereby he could rehabilitate himself, in the mind of Dorothy Arden primarily, and only secondarily in the mind of Dorothy Cassilis. Yet, like Peter and the way of repentance he craved, Lovell found no way of amendment, though he sought it throughout the dragging hours of the night. Toward morning, utterly worn out, he finally fell into a troubled, broken, haunted sleep.

After the first shock which had brought the two women into close and intimate communion had passed, their natural jealousies and antagonisms reasserted themselves.

The present danger ceased to be pressing. The tie that had temporarily bound them was broken, and each began in her heart to make excuses for the man. He had gone with bowed head across the upland and through the pass. There was something in his attitude which bespoke dejection, shame, repentance. Like true women they were prone to make excuses. The man who had lied was not the man they loved, but they loved the man they

loved none the less because under some evil obsession he had exhibited himself in such a guise. Yet although both thought the same things, neither spoke her thoughts to the other. They remained side by side in front of the cave in silence.

Dorothy Cassilis was ashamed that she had called on Dorothy Arden for help, and Dorothy Arden was angered that she had volunteered protection. Now that he was away, each woman believed that Lovell would never lie again, that alone she could have brought him to reason and right thinking. They ate their miserable meal in silence, each thinking of the lonely man down on the sands with nothing to break his fast, neither realizing that in his shame he could not have swallowed a morsel of food.

Early that night they went back to their rooms in the cave. There was little speech between them. They were not accustomed to bid each other good-night and they did not care to begin. Dorothy Arden went into Lovell's rooms and brought forth the rifle.

"We had better keep these ourselves," she said, extending it and the pistol. "You may have either one you choose."

"I know nothing about either," faltered the younger woman.

"I should think any woman would know enough to pull a trigger in an emergency," said Dorothy Arden. "Here, take the pistol; it's easier to handle."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### UNWELCOME VISITORS

HAVING been awake for so much of the night, Lovell's sleep, which had at first been light, restless and disturbed, at last became heavy, and toward morning he lay like one in a stupor. It was broad daylight before he awakened. Whether the rays of the sun, penetrating the niche in which he lay and falling on his face, or whether a strange rhythmical *click-clack* sound awakened him, he could not tell. At any rate, so soon as he opened his eyes he was conscious of both light and noise.

There was nothing novel about the

sunlight, but he had never before heard a sound like that which now smote his ear. Usually he awakened with every sense keenly alert. To open his eyes, to stretch himself, to rise to his feet, to move away, were practically simultaneous actions on all ordinary occasions. This morning he lay heavily. The noise was sharp, and it appeared to be growing in volume while maintaining its regular succession in sound.

Such was Lovell's lethargy and inertia that for a few moments he made no effort to find out what it was. He only listened. It seemed to be growing louder, as if it were coming rapidly nearer. It was a sound which might be produced by striking wood on wood, he decided, although its volume would imply hundreds of hands and blows.

AS he speculated, he wondered if the noise were real or only some product of his overstrained imagination. That it was a reality another sound unmistakably proved. And this awoke him to instant action. It was a human voice!

He opened his eyes and listened for a second; then he leaped to his feet and stood gazing amazed, terrified beyond expression at what he saw. The sea beyond the reef was covered with Papuan canoes! They were headed for the break in the barrier reef which gave entrance to the lagoon. Indeed, the first canoes already were passing through the entrance. He did not take time to count them, but he was sure that there were at least fifty of them. Each one contained from twenty to fifty Polynesians.

The gaudily colored, fantail sterns of the huge war canoes raked up high into the air. Their broad, heavy prows were grotesquely carved and painted. Their bodies were long and narrow, and on one side or the other of each canoe smaller outriggers connected by long, unsubstantial-looking poles served to balance the cranky vessels and make them seaworthy. On the larger boats a light platform for carrying passengers had been built between the outrigger and the canoe proper. Slender pole masts rose forward in some of the vessels, but as the wind was off-shore no sails were set.

Every man in every canoe was facing the direction in which they were going. The squatting men were paddling rhythmically and in unison, and the *clicking-clacking* sound that he heard was caused by the fact that as each man finished his stroke he lifted his heavy paddle and struck it sharply against the gunwale of the canoe; thus each stroke was followed by a little crash, and there was a queer sort of harmony maintained between all of the canoes.

ON the platforms stood or sat many other persons—some of whom, from their broad, flying grass skirts were evidently women. The men who were not rowing were armed with long or short clubs and slender lances or spears. Lovell could see their polished tops and edges of sharks' teeth or jagged fish-bones or sharpened volcanic glass glistening in the sun. The men were naked save for breech-clouts; and their huge, dark, frizzled heads of hair, their gaudily painted faces, their feather trimmings, no less than their brightly colored wooden shields and the weapons, indicated that they were prepared for war. Indeed they were so near that Lovell thought he could distinguish in some of the canoes bound bodies, as if captives, perhaps destined to serve in some hideous orgy on the shore.

The men, in color a light brown, were tall and muscular and fierce-looking. Advanced on a platform in the foremost canoe was one who seemed to be a chief. He was taller and more elaborately painted and decorated than the others, and it was his halloo which had aroused Lovell. The keen-eyed savages, surrounding their leader and searching the shore with their glances, had suddenly caught sight of him as he lay in the niche in full view from the sea. Now as he stood out on the sand, he was instantly seen by everybody. So surprised were the Papuans that, whether by order or command, they simultaneously stopped rowing, and from a multitude of throats a great menacing cry burst forth, while paddles were brandished threateningly in the morning air.

Although Lovell was sunburned and browned by his life in the open air, his

skin must have seemed very white to those dusky adventurers from the sea. Evidently they had come from some of the far distant almost unknown islands to the southwest, perhaps for sago and cocoanuts, perhaps to celebrate on this particular island, which might have possessed some ritualistic significance, one of the cannibalistic feasts for which they were notorious. At any rate, every white man was an enemy, alike to those who had ever seen one and to those who had only heard of them in some story of savage warfare.

They signified the animus which was within them without a moment of hesitation. The chief, quickest to recover from his astonishment, lifted his spear, drew it back and hurled it with astonishing force across the lagoon directly at the white man. His aim was perfect, but the distance was too great to be covered by the power of any human arm. The spear flashed gracefully through the air in a great parabola, and buried itself harmlessly in the sand on the extreme edge of the water some distance from the white man.

LOVELL was unarmed. The rifle and the pistol and even the ax or hatchet were all in possession of the women on the upland. His first thought was to possess himself of the weapon before him. Although the distance between the leading vessels and the shore was rapidly narrowing from the momentum of the canoes, he ran down the beach to the water's edge and grabbed the spear still quivering point downward in the sand. Finding it a sharply pointed, serviceable weapon, he shook it a moment in defiance and then started to run. Another spear from the nearest man to the chief grazed him. This warrior's example was followed by every man on the platform of the first boat. At the same instant at a word of command the rowers dug their paddles into the water once more, and the boats fairly leaped toward the white man.

Foreseeing their action, Lovell had run back up the beach and away from the water's edge. Still the spears fell all around him. Fortunately none hit him. Realizing that he would now have

to fight for his life and the lives of the women, and that every weapon would be of the utmost value, he stopped until he had gathered up an armful of the lances. As he did so, another danger menaced him. There fell all about him a shower of stones cast from slings. He had time to mark that the stones were egg-shaped and pointed. One of them indeed grazed his shoulder, making a painful though superficial cut.

The Papuans shouted with savage joy, and some of them now hurled their *ulas*, short throwing-clubs, at him, but Lovell ran with the fleetness of a deer, pursued by sling-shots and spears and clubs until the natives saw that he was out of range. He raced up the beach toward the narrow ravine and the tall, stone gateway at its inner end which led to the plateau.

BY this time the waters of the lagoon were covered with the canoes. If they had been led by a general, the course of the canoes would have paralleled the shore in an effort to head him off—which might have been successful, for the light vessels could be driven through the water with astonishing speed, and in the long run they would probably have tired him out and caught him. But this did not occur to any of the savage tacticians. They drove their boats high up on the beach directly before them and swarmed out on the sand. The rowers, dropping their paddles, seized their weapons and joined the chiefs and headmen, the captives being left bound and under guard on the beach for the time being.

They all tore down the beach after Lovell at top speed, wasting their breath in savage war cries and yells which incited him to faster movement. He had never sprinted so fast in his life around the bases, or on the cinder track, or across the gridiron. As he ran, his mind was working as quickly as his feet and legs.

This was a danger which, while it had always been possible, he had scarcely expected. The situation appeared to be practically hopeless. At the lowest estimate there were from one thousand to fifteen hundred savage warriors in pursuit of him. Even if he had possessed

weapons in abundance, they would get him in the end if they persisted. And he had heard enough about their courage, endurance and ferocity not to have any doubts as to their persistence.

It was not of himself that he thought as he ran, but of the women. The savages could only kill him, but the possible fate of the women filled him with horror. He would be powerless in the end to protect them. Well, if the worst came to the worst, they could all die together, and he would see that the women died first.

He judged it to be about six o'clock in the morning. The savages evidently had taken advantage of the calm, beautiful night for their long voyage. The sea was as smooth as the sea ever gets to be, and they had wisely made their journey under the clear moonlight rather than through the long, hot day.

He wondered whether the women were awake and up. He wondered how he should get word to them. It was some distance from the gate at the end of the ravine to the cave in the wall where they had made their home. He could not arouse them by a call. They would probably be engaged in getting their breakfast and would be in utter ignorance of their peril unless the united shouts of his assailants warned them. Well, he could not help that. It was a task beyond him.

Whether he could hold these savages at the pass in the rocks he could not tell. At least he would make a brave try. He did not doubt that if he could hold his position long enough the women would find out what was happening.

All he could do was to fight. He determined that he would do that in such a way as to give his enemies pause.

And there was a singular feeling of satisfaction in his mind. Before he died he would show those women another side of his character. Their last thoughts of him should be as of a brave man who, having fought to the bitter end, had laid down his life for them.

ARRIVED at the ravine, he saw that his pursuers were further behind than when the race started. He was a better runner than they. He climbed hastily up the narrowing, broken trail,

until he gained the head of the ravine. From there he could not see the lower opening, owing to the twisting and turning of the passage. But he could hear the shouts and cries drawing nearer.

He had before studied this spot and the possibilities for its defense, although never quite so critically as at that moment. The huge, pinnacle-like rocks that marked the entrance rose ten feet on either side of him like towers. The space between was broad enough for two or three people to pass without crowding. On either side, beyond the base of the upright rocks, fell away the perpendicular walls of the cliff. He had often thought that the pathway, or trail, which led up to the entrance had originally been artificial for the last ten or fifteen feet of its length, although if that were the case it had become so thoroughly blended with the natural rock as to be indistinguishable. He had made no attempt to clear the ravine of most of the fallen trees after the great storm which had broken upon them the night of their arrival on the island. One or two which had squarely obstructed the path he had moved, but the others lay where the torrent had carried them. The obstructed trail was difficult, therefore, for more than two or three to ascend at the same time.

HAD Lovell possessed modern weapons and had enjoyed some cover, he might have held the pass indefinitely. As it was, the disadvantages of the situation lay in this: that in any defense of the opening, or gate, he had to stand in full view of the attackers on the trail below, where there was a broad shelf just at the turn, which would hold a number of persons. And if the enemy could scale the cliffs on either side, or gain access to the plateau in any other way, of course he would have to flee.

On the upland the trees grew on the very edge of the plateau. Some of them had fallen near the entrance. Lovell had but a few moments for preparation, but his mind worked with extraordinary quickness. Carefully laying the spears,—he had gathered eleven—against the rocky gate, he rushed over to the nearest fallen tree. It was a small palm. He

could not have lifted it under ordinary circumstances, but in the tremendous necessity he exerted a strength that was almost superhuman, and dragged the tree across the entrance. Its trunk was not more than six inches in diameter, but he rested its top on one side so that it lay across the opening at an angle of forty-five degrees. If he only had had the ax, he could have chopped down other small trees and made some sort of screen. As it was, the tree would give him a little protection and it would help check the rush if any were attempted.

The plateau was bare of stones, but the trail below him on either side was heaped with them. He stepped over the slender barricade to the trail, and although the shouts of the savages told him they were near, he worked desperately, tossing stone after stone up on the plateau. In the end these missiles of the cave man might prove of value. A spear whizzing by his shoulder—and which he had the coolness to seize—warned him that he could tarry no longer. He clambered up the narrow trail, leaped the barrier and turned with spear in hand.

HE calculated he could here make good his defense for some time, unless there were some way to the plateau which he did not know but which the savages could make use of. Even if there were, he reasoned rapidly and correctly, in their impetuosity they would not try it for some time. Lovell had no mind to throw his life away unnecessarily. His plan was to fight at the entrance as long as possible and then take advantage of the first opportunity to run to the cave, where with the aid of the firearms he could hope to hold them off for some time longer.

Of course he realized that there was only one possible ending to the encounter if the savages persevered, but the joy of combat, the inspiration in facing fearful odds, the pride of race, the instinct of protection and defense of womankind, were all in his blood. He fairly rejoiced in a terrific, ruthless way when he saw the brown faces, the bushy heads, the plumes and spears and shields, of the Papuans.

## CHAPTER XXV

## HOW LOVELL HELD THE PASS

THE islanders came upward, panting and yelling. As they caught sight of Lovell, they turned from the shelf to the last few yards of narrow upward-trending trail. More spears were thrown. The men were coming on the run, staggering upward. Their footing was uncertain and their aim indifferent, for none of the missiles hit Lovell.

Just before the last Olympic games, one of Lovell's friends had practiced for the pentathlon by throwing the javelin, and Lovell, visiting his training-quarters, had also acquired no little skill at hurling the spear, more as an interesting accomplishment than anything else. The weapon was therefore familiar to him. It was characteristic of the man that, reserving his own supply, he picked up one of the spears that had been thrown at him and hurled it downward with all his force. The point caught the leading savage fairly in the breast. Such was the impetus that Lovell's powerful arm had given it that the barbed lance passed clear through the Papuan. The man screamed, threw up his hands and went down as if struck by a rifle bullet. As Lovell made his throw, he had stepped backward behind the nearest column. The next moment the air was filled with whirling clubs and stones.

Choosing his time immediately after the discharge, Lovell leaped out again and as fast as he could launch them, hurled lance after lance at the savages. The shelf below and the first few feet of the trail were crowded with warriors now, all yelling madly. Some of the lances were caught on upraised shields or diverted by war clubs skillfully interposed, but some of them got home. On the other hand, Lovell did not come out scathless. One return spear grazed his body; another gashed deeply the calf of his leg. A throwing club struck him on his left arm—which hung almost numb for a moment. Two spears which quivered in the trunk of the palm that lay across the opening showed that it had afforded him some little protection. Instead of driving him to cover, these

wounds seemed to fill his mind with battle madness, like that of a Berserker of old.

He leaned far over the palm in the middle of the gate, yelling incoherently like the savages themselves, as he hurled every remaining spear into the mass of them. And when these were gone, he stooped and picked up stones. Like Polyphemus he tossed huge rocks that under other circumstances he could scarcely lift, into the midst of the throng.

It was more than they could stand; they quickly gave back; they leaped from shelf to trail and then pell-mell around the protecting cliff of the rocks out of sight.

For a moment Lovell had an inclination to follow, but excepting the stones, he was almost weaponless. The two spears that stuck in the palm trunk he quickly made his own. Forgetful of his wound, he shouted long and loud in triumph. It was a great game he was playing, and he was winning. He could see three or four dead bodies lying at the bend of the trail. He was hesitating as to whether or not to go out and gather up the weapons that strewed the rocks at his feet, when a new assault gave him pause.

Stones from the slings began to fall around him. Though out of sight, the Papuan slingers were hurling their shots around him with astonishing accuracy. Of course there was no possibility of breaking cover amid such a rain of sling-shots. He took shelter behind one of the huge gate-posts and waited with his two spears and his sadly diminished pile of stones.

From where he stood he could see the trail perfectly. Indeed, he took the risk of uncovering himself somewhat for that purpose. Presently his watching eye caught sight of a savage creeping around the protection off the rock on his hands and knees. The aborigines had reasoned correctly enough that their sling-stone fire would compel him to take cover, and they hoped that one of them might rush up the rocks and engage him in a hand-to-hand conflict, thus enabling the main body to come up.

Disregarding the peril, Lovell once



more stood in the opening and hurled a spear at the crouching savage. His foot slipped, and the weapon struck the rock wall and glanced off harmlessly. The Papuan, seeing this, leaped to his feet, but the white man's second and last spear struck him in the shoulder and drove him back. The next instant the narrow way was again filled with men. Lovell had time for but one cast of a stone. Although it was effective, the rush could not be stopped in that way.

He had a second to realize that now he stood practically defenseless against the horde. It was too late to run. They saw him weaponless. The play was now in their hands. With the same sort of an instinct that causes a gorilla to stop and beat his breast before he seizes his prey, thereby exposing himself to the bullet of the hunter, the savage islanders stopped and began to shout triumphantly, while from the rear the chief and the head men pushed forward. Evidently to give the *coup-de-grâce* was a Polynesian privilege highly to be prized in the case of so important a victim, for the men on shelf and trail were separating to let some great ones come to the front.

The pause seemed to Lovell to give him a chance to get away. He turned to run, when a woman's scream stopped him. There, stumbling, staggering toward him, was Dorothy Cassilis! She was as white as death, not only from her rapid run but from a fear which was almost paralyzing. In her hands she carried the rifle and the ax.

"Here," she screamed, her hands out-thrust toward him.

THE savages were almost on them.

They were coming slowly, chanting some sort of a song as if to celebrate their prospective capture. If he could stop them for a few moments, or until the girl reached him, all would not be lost. In desperation, Lovell seized the tree-trunk, heaved its top up into the air and shoved it forward and downward through the opening. It did not fall on anyone; it did not hurt anyone; but it caused them to give back, and they fell into some confusion as they sought to get out of its way. They roared and

yelled with renewed exultation when they saw him now absolutely without protection in the opening. Evidently they did not intend to kill him at once, for they made no effort to spear him as they started up again, clambering over the tree-top.

The next second Dorothy Cassilis fell at Lovell's feet with the rifle uplifted toward his hand. In another second he fired the weapon. The roar of its discharge in the narrow pass was deafening. The heavy bullet smashed point blank into the body of the sub-chief who was leading. It "dum-dummed," and tore like a piece of shrapnel into the body of the next man. To throw out the shell and pull the trigger again, to fire a second and third shot into the mass, took but a moment. The savages broke and fled with wild yells of terror. Some of them had never heard white man's thunderous weapon or felt its awful power. Those who had did not desire to hear or see it again.

The rain of stones ceased, and a ghastly silence fell over the place. Lovell turned to the woman cowering behind the rocks at his feet.

"You came in the nick of time," he said; "another moment and they would have got me."

"Who and what are they?" gasped the girl.

"Savages from other islands. They woke me up this morning. Where's Arden?"

"I don't know. We heard the noise of the conflict. We saw it all from the hill. I was almost frightened to death. She gave me these and told me to run to you with them."

"Why didn't she bring them to me herself?"

"She went to light the beacon," faltered the terrified woman. "We shall die. We shall be killed."

"Better to die than to fall into their hands," said Lovell grimly. "And we won't die without sending a number of them ahead of us. Look," he said, turning toward the ravine heaped with bodies.

But Dorothy Cassilis was not looking.

"See!" she cried, pointing across the



Lovell leaped out, and as fast as he could launch



them, hurled lance after lance at the savages.

island, and Lovell followed her glance. He saw a huge column of smoke rising from the south end of the plateau. "She has lighted the beacon."

"That is Arden," he cried. "I knew she could not be a coward."

Indeed, she had taken a more dangerous part than Dorothy Cassilis. At least, if Lovell's defense failed and the savages had got to the plateau, she would have been alone, defenseless save for the ten shots within the magazine of the automatic.

"Why has she lighted the beacon?" asked Lovell.

"We went up on the hill this morning, and we thought we saw smoke on the horizon."

"Great God," said the man, "if that could only be! If I had but a few more shots, I could hold them off indefinitely. but—"

"Look," cried Dorothy Cassilis.

She pointed off to the left, where tall trees grew in the ravine, the tops of which were level with the plateau. In the fronds of the tallest palm they saw plainly the bushy head of a Papuan. This was a method of scaling cliffs to which Lovell could offer no defense.

"Let us go back to the cave," urged Dorothy Cassilis, clasping his arm in terror.

"We have got to give Arden time to get there first," said Lovell coolly.

He was loath to waste a shot which could by no possibility kill more than one man. Yet he thought that perhaps if he shot the leading Papuan out of the tree they would hesitate about attempting it again. Slowly he raised the rifle. The woman and the warrior both watched him. The latter threw up his shield, but the heavy bullet tore through it like paper. The islander, shot through the body, plunged out of the tree and into the depths below.

"Here she comes," cried Dorothy Cassilis.

Lovell glanced back. Dorothy Arden was running toward them. With a wave of his hand he indicated she should turn to the cave. He and Dorothy Cassilis started on a dead run away from the pass. They were not pursued until they had gone half the distance to the cave.

Then the Papuans, finding the pass totally unguarded, swarmed up and through it.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE KISS OF FAREWELL

LOVELL shouted to Dorothy Arden.

She caught the words "Back—cave!" but his gesture told her more. He had decided to retreat to the cave and wanted her to go there also. She was nearer it than the other two; she might have gained it long before them, but she had no such thought. She changed her course slightly, so as to intercept them. Dorothy Cassilis appeared almost unnerved. She stumbled and staggered, and Lovell almost dragged her along. Dorothy Arden was the swifter. She met them at half the distance.

"Take her other hand," shouted Lovell.

There was no time for extended conversation. Dorothy Arden seized Dorothy Cassilis' other hand, and the three started running again. Presently Lovell exclaimed:

"It was splendidly done to light that beacon—but why?"

"I think there is a ship yonder—smoke," panted Dorothy Arden.

Dorothy Cassilis looked up piteously. Lovell felt sorry for her. He had just praised one woman; the other deserved something.

"If you had not brought me that rifle," he said, "I should have been killed in another minute."

This seemed to give the half-fainting girl an access of strength. She summoned her resolution, shook herself free of the other two and ran more lightly, and the trio tore madly for the cave. Lovell hoped they might round the curve of the cliff at the base of the hill and get in the cave without being observed. This would give them a little more time. He cast a glance over his shoulder. He saw the enemy coming through the gate he had held against such odds. It was a far shot, but he decided to try it. As the savages caught sight of the other two figures, they expressed their great

surprise and satisfaction by a new outburst of yelling. Dorothy Arden's hair had become unbound and unbraidied in her run. A strong wind was now blowing. They were running against it, and the hair streamed behind her in a dark wave. The disarray of their clothing added the final revelation to the Papuans.

"Run on; I'll try another shot on them," said Lovell.

He whirled about, raised the rifle, took quick but careful aim and sent two bullets in quick succession into the crowd. This gave the savages pause. They could make no reply to such an attack. No sling-shot propelled by ever so powerful an arm could hurt a man at that distance, nor could a spear have been cast one quarter of the way. Yells again uprose, but more as an expression of rage than anything else.

Lovell would have been glad to stand there in the open and pump bullets out of the rifle into the mass of them. His fingers fairly itched to throw the lever and fire again and again, but he had grown cooler as he ran. He realized that practically all that stood between the warriors and the women, to say nothing of himself, was the eleven cartridges that remained in the magazine and the ten charges in the heavy automatic, two of which had to be saved for the women. He turned again and ran for the cave.

They had not obeyed his orders. Dorothy Arden had stopped within ten feet of him to watch. Dorothy Cassilis had gone a little further, and then she too had stopped.

"Back," he roared furiously and even angrily. "I tell you to go on."

Without a word they took up the race again. The islanders had scattered, but when they saw that the man who dealt out thunder and fire and smoke that killed in so horrible a way was again running, they resumed the pursuit. Not one in a hundred had ever seen a white man or heard a gun and felt or witnessed its effects before. Their courage, therefore, was magnificent.

THE fugitives pressed on, and in a few moments turned the corner of the headland, dashed along the cliff and

entered the cave. An astonishing sense of security and relief came over Lovell as he passed through the narrow entrance and found himself protected by the wall. He leaned breathless and almost spent against the wall, striving to recover himself. Dorothy Cassilis sank down on the sand and hid her face. Dorothy Arden sat on one of the rock benches they had made. They had but a few moments to rest, a few moments to recover their breath.

"I want to say," panted out Lovell, "while I have time, how ashamed I am of my conduct yesterday. I don't know what came over me. I don't know what I did or said, but at least it showed me one thing: how noble, how true, you both were. We are in deadly peril. I have fought for you and I shall fight for you until the end, but it is impossible to conquer. I shall save at least two shots in the automatic, and if I am beaten down you will know what to do."

"Yes," said Dorothy Arden resolutely.

"I owe my life to you already, and to this brave girl who brought me the weapon." He stepped over and laid his hand on Dorothy Cassilis' bowed shoulder.

"Don't," said the girl, looking up at him, her face white, her eyes swimming. "I was afraid."

"But you did it."

And here an impulse for which she was ever afterward to be grateful came into Dorothy Cassilis' mind. She pointed at Dorothy Arden.

"It was she who made me. I was afraid."

"No man could deserve such devotion, especially after yesterday," continued Lovell, looking toward Dorothy Arden. "And you—it was magnificent for you to brave the danger that they might overwhelm me and intercept you, to light the beacon. That cloud you saw, did you not mark it as we ran?"

"Yes. It was larger."

"Should it be a ship, it may arrive in time, although unless it be an armed vessel—well—" He stopped and shook his head. "They shall not come at you while I live," he added quickly.

"And if they capture us?" asked Dorothy Cassilis.

"A living death. You understand?"

The girl nodded.

"You must kill yourselves before that happens."

"Oh, I cannot," said Dorothy Cassilis.

"I'll take that duty upon myself," said Dorothy Arden firmly. "It is the only thing to do."

A sudden burst of shouts came from the narrow opening.

"They are there," exclaimed Lovell. "Good-by." He seized the rifle and sprang toward the narrow entrance to the cave.

Idly, on some of the long afternoons he had built up a sort of rude, loosely compacted wall of stone, a little higher than his head, across the entrance and a few feet from the opening to leave free passage. He ran to it and thrust the muzzle of the rifle through the chinks that he had left, and waited. The islanders streamed up toward the cliff wall. Lovell aimed the rifle and pulled the trigger three times in rapid succession. The crowd of savages gave back and ran to cover behind the cliffs on either side, leaving their dead behind them.

Seeing the coast again clear, Lovell turned back to the cave. A few steps brought him to the women. Dorothy Arden stood with bowed head and folded arms. Her hand still clutched the pistol. Dorothy Cassilis was on her knees, evidently praying. Perhaps the standing woman prayed too.

"I have driven them back for the time being," said Lovell. "I just came to reassure you and for a drink from the spring."

Swallowing long draughts of the cool, refreshing water which bubbled away in the far corner, he bathed his hands and arms and face. As he rose, for the first time Dorothy Arden noticed the blood on his shoulder.

"You have been wounded," she cried.

"It is nothing," was the answer; "only a scratch. Now I must go back. I don't suppose I had better leave that barricade again. If I fall, you stand in the entrance. They can only come one or two at a time—it is so narrow. There are ten shots in the automatic. Shoot

them down if they try to rush the entrance, and then retreat to your room, bar the door and hold it to the very last minute. But if they break that down—you know."

"Yes."

"Good-by."

"Wait," said Dorothy Arden. "I am your wife and I love you. Will you kiss me even if only as a woman in farewell?"

Lovell bent and pressed his lips to her forehead.

"Not there," said Dorothy Arden, lifting up her face.

He kissed her upon the lips and—

"Kiss me," whispered Dorothy Cassilis brokenly. "I am a woman too, and I—"

Somehow or other, after he had kissed Dorothy Arden that way, the man hesitated, but it was Dorothy Arden who decided him.

"Yes," she said, "—poor child, it can make no difference now."

And so Lovell bent and kissed Dorothy Cassilis on the lips as well. The girl fell on the sand and caught him by the feet.

"Oh," she cried, "I can't bear it."

But Lovell tore himself away, and the next moment they heard the crash of the rifle as he took his position at the barricade.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE RECOGNITION

THE courage of those savages was beyond all praise. This time they actually made a determined rush directly at the mouth of the cave, recklessly exposing their naked bodies to the heavy bullets. And for all they knew this awe-inspiring demigod of a white man might have a thousand shots at his command.

If Lovell had followed his inclination, he would have pumped bullets into them as fast as he could pull the lever. They made so big a target that it was hardly necessary to take aim. But again he restrained himself. He fired slowly, choosing the most prominent as his targets. There was something appalling in the cool deliberation with which one



bullet after another smashed into the mass. As they approached nearer, one shot would account for two or three men.

They got fearfully close before their rush was checked; then they retreated with headlong speed in every direction. Lovell was forced to husband his fire and let them go unharmed. The impact of the heavy stones from their slings, each weighing half a pound or more and flung with tremendous force, had knocked the upper part of the barricade to pieces. Now, too late, Lovell wished he had made it stronger. He could still crouch down and take cover, but his freedom of movement was impaired.

The islanders took cover behind trees and boulders and the curve of the rocky wall, so as to be safe from the deadly rifle-fire, and began to batter down the weak, narrow rock wall until they actually succeeded in demolishing it, reducing it to a heap of stones.

Then they made another charge. There were only three shots left in the magazine, and Lovell was hesitating as to whether to pour them in or to reserve them for close quarters when an unexpected and well aimed shot over his head stopped the savages.

Throwing his head up and backward, he caught sight of Dorothy Arden kneeling in the hole in the wall, the automatic clutched in her hand. Another moment and the brown wave would have broken upon him, but this surprising shot from an unexpected quarter stopped them. Lovell, quick to seize the psychological value of the moment, sent another bullet into them. They fled a second time.

Dorothy Arden had saved his life. Risking a renewal of the assault, he ran back into the cave. He called to Dorothy Arden to come down from the shelf to which she had climbed. She obeyed him not a moment too soon, for from whatever concealment they could muster, the Papuans diverted a portion of their hurling attack upon the opening in the wall to which their attention had been so dramatically called. Stone bullets splintered around the edges, but some came hurtling through, and some spears and clubs also fell within the cave. Their accuracy of aim was astonishing,

but it was easy for the defenders to avoid the missiles within the cave by withdrawing to one side.

"You saved my life and the lives of all of us," cried Lovell, "but for God's sake don't do it again. How many shots did you fire?"

"One."

"I thought so. There are nine left. Remember the last two."

"I shall not forget," answered the woman, her eyes shining at his praise.

"Now I must go back to the mouth of the cave," continued the man.

"Don't expose yourself any more than you have to," said Dorothy Arden.

"I shall not," answered the man, smiling with pleasure in spite of himself. "And don't you go too near the window."

"Look, look," screamed poor Dorothy Cassilis, whom they had both apparently forgotten.

She pointed toward the opening above their heads. Moving athwart the window against the light of the sky, they saw the wavering trunk of a mighty palm tree where never tree had been before. They stared at it a moment, uncomprehending. The next moment the meaning flashed into the mind of Dorothy Arden.

"They're going to make a ladder of that tree," she screamed.

"Quick, the ax," cried Lovell.

As Dorothy Arden handed him the weapon for which he asked, he turned to Dorothy Cassilis and thrust the rifle into her hand, exclaiming:

"This is apt to be the end. Use it well."

And as the woman staggered to her feet and held the rifle as if it were a poisonous serpent, he turned to Dorothy Arden:

"You to the mouth of the cave. Don't expose yourself. Crouch behind the rock. Keep them off. I will attend to them here."

He leaped at the broken wall, which on the inside was as easy of ascent as a pair of stairs. As he did so, the heavy trunk of the tree crashed inward against the opening.

Outside, the Papuans, who could climb like monkeys, scrambled up it. It had

been a shrewd thought to make a scaling ladder out of the largest of the prostrate palms, for the multitude of hands could easily lift it.

Inside, Lovell, now covered with blood from many slight wounds, climbed the rocks. They met on the top. The leading man had just gained a footing. He crouched down on the narrow shelf, and as Lovell stepped into view the islander drove the spear straight at his heart.

Lovell had just time to cover his breast with his arm. The bright obsidian point, ground to a razor sharpness, tore through the muscles of his arm and buried itself deep in his breast. His movement had deflected the weapon, however, and it missed his heart. If he had been standing out in the open and received such a wound, it would have knocked him over instantly, but in the excitement of the battle he scarcely thought of it, though his left arm was pinned to his side and the blood was gushing out furiously.

Before the brown man could withdraw the spear, the white man struck him full on the head with the ax. Dropping the weapon, Lovell seized the tree-top with his right hand, and with one mighty heave he threw it backward with its swarming human load.

He was sick with pain and faint from loss of blood and the frightful exertions he had undergone. That was his final effort. He fell back on the shelf, the demand for desperate action satisfied and no longer pressing, in a fainting condition. As he did so, he heard a rapid rattle of shots beneath him. One in particular crashed in his dull ear like the detonation of a cannon-shot. Thereafter the wild yelling suddenly gave place to ghastly silence.

Summoning the last vestiges of his strength, Lovell started down the broken wall on the outside of the cave. He was not sure of the descent, for he lost his footing about halfway down and plunged headlong to the floor of the cave. The spear-shaft broke as his weight fell upon it, leaving the point and head in his breast. A spasm of agony shot through him, restoring him to consciousness for a moment. The cave was full of smoke—

he was blind with pain, anyway. As he came rolling down, his out-thrust foot struck against Dorothy Arden and hurled her to the floor—as he had hurled her to the floor in the magnificent office in the Megalithic building a few months before!

LOVELL was almost a dead man. It is probable that nothing else but the sight of that woman lying on the floor, the blood trickling from her temple where one of the savages spears had grazed it, would have kept him from collapsing. As it was, he landed on his feet or feet downward, his body braced against the wall, and he made a tremendous effort to retain his fleeting consciousness. Slowly he assumed an erect position. Then slowly he bent over the prostrate girl. He fell to his knees. He stared at her, a strange new light in his eyes. Outside, it was very still, for the savages had been beaten off again and with fearful loss, and they gave no sign of their presence, but inside the cave the stillness was deathly.

Dorothy Arden had been stunned by the fall. She lay dazed for a moment. Dorothy Cassilis stood with the rifle in her hand near the entrance. Dorothy Arden had actually met the rush of the savages in the narrow opening. She had driven back all but one, and he had leaped over and raised his spear to strike her down when Dorothy Cassilis had shot him. He lay stone dead on his shield, his great bushy head, feather-adorned, pointing into the cave and adding the last touch of the terrible to the tremendous scene.

As Lovell bent over the prostrate woman, she opened her eyes and looked at him.

"Dorothy," he cried hoarsely in a bewilderment and incomprehension appalling to listen to. "My wife, my wife! In God's name, what are we doing here?"

"Your wife?" almost screamed Dorothy Cassilis, leaping to his side and clasping his shoulder.

"Yes."

"And who am I?"

"You are Miss Cassilis, I think," said Lovell more weakly. "What are we—what is the meaning of—my God—



"Your wife?" almost screamed Dorothy Cassilis, leaping to his side and clasping his shoulder.

Dorothy, speak to me!" he added, turning away from the other girl to his wife.

As Dorothy Arden lifted herself up, Lovell pitched forward and fell across her knees, his blood staining her white skin.

He rolled to the ground insensible. As Dorothy Arden got unsteadily to her feet, she thought him dead.

"You see," she said triumphantly to the other woman, "I was right. You were the liar. He recognized me before he died. Oh, Robert, oh, my God, Robert, my husband!"

"They are coming again," panted out Dorothy Cassilis in sudden and overmastering terror, for she could see over the remains of the barricade and through the crooked passage from where she stood.

"I don't care much now," answered Dorothy Arden. She bent over her husband, who lay as white and as still as death itself, except where the red blood welled out of the wound in the breast. She took his head into her arms and kissed him as in farewell. She rose to her feet. "We will fight to the last," she said with a new access of resolution. "Here,"—she thrust the pistol in Dorothy Cassilis' hand,—"there is one shot left. Kill yourself at the last." She took the rifle from the other girl and picked up the ax. "I'll take these," she continued.

"But you?" faltered Dorothy Cassilis.

"They sha'n't take me alive." She gave one look at her husband. "Good-by, Robert," she cried, and sprang to the entrance.

Yes, Dorothy Cassilis was right: they were coming. They were near at hand. The Papuans had spent most of their stone artillery; their lances were all

gone, and they had already cast most of their throwing clubs; but they came on, swinging their stone hatchets and other hand-to-hand weapons.

As Dorothy Arden passed the dead warrior, she seized his shield. She stepped out into the open, leaned the ax against the rock and stood there erect and dauntless, shield on arm, gun in hand. Her long hair unbound, her tunic torn to rags, white-breasted like the dawn, she confronted them.

She lifted the rifle and fired the last two shots into the midst of them, then cast it aside and picked up the ax. The shouting savages, checked a little by the two shots, were coming on again. They had wit enough to see as she threw the gun away that the deadliest weapon they had to face was useless. They were yelling like fiends as they started forward.

Strange instincts of the past, savage emotions dormant in the blood of man and woman to-day, that have come down through thousands of years, that had been hidden in the overlay of civilization, surged up in the breast of this half-naked, armed female animal standing in the cave-mouth defending the body of her lover and husband, and another shrinking woman whom she hated, whom she pitied, over whom she had at last triumphed.

She raised her own glorious voice in some wild war-cry of other days. The savages heard it and paused, amazed, thrilled, bewildered by the glorious picture. It was to them as if some goddess called.

Dorothy Arden, torn, battered, blood-stained, with only a wooden shield for defense and a blunted ax with which to fight, did not wait for them. She actually leaped forward to meet them.

The final installment of "*The Island of Surprise*" will be in the August Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands July 23rd.



# John Martin Makes His Escape

*A convict breaking stone—and a few hours later delivering a lecture on the South Pole; that's the extraordinary situation on which this fine tale by a brilliant new writer is founded.*

By Victor Bridges

Author of "The Man From Nowhere," etc.

**J**OHN MARTIN crept in between two of the great granite boulders and flung himself down full length upon the wet grass. His breath came hurriedly, in sobbing gasps. The perspiration rolled down his forehead and trickled into his eyes, and a crushing sense of utter weariness seemed to numb every muscle in his body.

For a long time he lay there without moving, until the wild throbbing of his heart began to die down, and the deadly faintness of exhaustion gradually passed away. At last, he rolled over onto his elbows and, supporting his chin in his hands, stared out across the moor. The mist through which he had blindly run and stumbled in that desperate race for liberty was already beginning to disperse. A slight breeze from the west had sprung up, carrying before it the filmy vapor which rose in the air in soft, fantastic eddies, like trails of smoke.

As he watched, the whole expanse of desolate moorland gradually stole into view. His eyes wandered over crest after crest of rocky hillocks, which rolled away into the far horizon like some gray, deserted sea. In the extreme distance the ground rose steadily towards a lonely headland which was just visible against the clouded sky.

Martin gazed at it in a sort of incredulous dream. Somewhere beyond this point lay the prison. An hour ago he had been slaving in those hated quarries. He had only to shut his eyes, and the scene leaped before him in all its hideous

reality: the warders strutting up and down with their rifles upon their shoulders, the coarse, crime-sodden faces of his companions, the monotonous clang of the picks striking upon the rock—every detail was burned upon his brain!

His escape had been the result of no previous arrangement or cunningly contrived plan. The mist had come on suddenly, sweeping across the moor like some great white cloud. The order to cease work had been promptly given, and the men had turned to take their places in the ranks. One hurried glance round had shown Martin that the nearest warder was at least sixteen paces away. In a moment he had taken his decision—had plunged away into the fog. A hoarse command had rung out; a charge of shot had whistled past him; and then, with a wild laugh, he had flung himself deep into the shelter of the advancing mist.

**T**URNING to the right to throw off his pursuers, he had run blindly forward across the open moor. His only idea had been to place as great a distance as possible between himself and the prison before the white shroud which enveloped him had lifted and dispersed.

Young and active, hardened with the rough life and meager fare, he had struggled on mile after mile, until at last he found himself upon one of those narrow tracks which connect the scattered moorland villages. He had followed this until, from utter weariness, he had scarcely been able to drag him-

self along. Looking round for some hiding-place, he had caught sight of a mass of granite boulders looming up through the rapidly thinning mist. With one last effort he had stumbled towards them and thrown himself down like a spent stag.

As he lay there, staring out across the deserted moor towards his late prison, the whole miserable wreckage of his life seemed to rise slowly before him. It stood out like some black ruin against the background of the past. He saw again the clever, smiling face of Mathieson, his partner — Mathieson, who had dragged him down to his own depths of crime and folly and left him to pay the cost. The knowledge of all he had lost gnawed unceasingly at his heart. With a low cry of rage he buried his face in his hands.

Suddenly the dull, rumbling sound of a gun boomed out from the direction of the distant headland. It fell on Martin's ears with a brutal significance, bringing him abruptly back to the dangers of his present position. Until now the fierce excitement of his escape, and the complete exhaustion which had followed it, had prevented him from realizing how desperate was his position. But the grim voice that echoed from the prison so menacingly over the lonely moor, reminded him with an abrupt eloquence of his real situation.

MARTIN sprang to his feet and glanced hurriedly round. Just behind him, at the base of the main rock, there was a small opening, a kind of miniature cave, which had evidently been blasted out with dynamite. It was a poor hiding-place at best, but to Martin's hunted eyes it seemed like the answer to some wild, unspoken prayer. He suddenly realized that he was standing up in full view of the open moor; and dropping on his hands and knees, he crawled quickly towards his new shelter.

It was rather bigger than he had at first imagined, and there were obvious signs that he was not the first occupier. Several old sacks, a bundle of sticks, two or three pieces of rope and a battered iron saucepan showed him that it was probably the occasional resort of some moorland shepherd.

Martin spread out one of the sacks and sat down. Until night came on, it would be madness to attempt any further escape. If he had not been already seen, he was safe enough here for a little while, unless the rightful owner should return.

"Boom!" Again the distant gun thundered out its warning to the countryside. Martin thought of the excitement which that sound would awake in the lonely moorland farms. Into every mind would leap the picture of some beetle-browed, heavy-jowled scoundrel, lurking about the moor, awaiting an opportunity to gratify his murderous instincts. Even penal servitude had not quite succeeded in killing his sense of humor, and a faint smile passed across his face at the imaginary portrait of himself.

Well, there was not much to laugh at, after all! Probably any one of those half-brutalized ruffians who had formed the greater part of his acquaintance for the last two years would, in his place, have stood a better chance of escape than he did. He glanced down at the hideous clothes that branded him to the world as a hunted criminal. Unless he could manage to change them within a few hours, he might just as well return to the prison and give himself up. Dressed as he was, starvation or capture stared him in the face.

If he could only get to London, there he would be safe until the first excitement of his escape had died down. Tom would stand by him again, as he had done at the time of the trial; and, after a little while, as soon as the search began to slacken, he would be able to slip out of the country.

But without money, and in convict's dress, what chance had he of reaching London? The whole district by this time was aware of his escape; to-morrow morning the whole of England would be discussing it over their breakfast. "Martin! Yes, you remember—Mathieson & Martin, the lawyers who went smash three years ago. Don't you recollect the case? Mathieson bolted; this fellow wasn't quite so smart—got seven years. Oh, yes, they'll catch him all right, poor devil!" He could picture the eager manner in which those who had known him



in other days would pounce upon the news as a savory subject of conversation—the glib, heartless jests that would be handed about if he were dragged back again to prison.

A sudden fierce resentment surged up in him, but died away again almost immediately. What was the good of being angry? His energies would be infinitely better employed in solving the problem of his present needs. After all, the matter was quite simple. If he wanted clothes, there was only one method of gratifying his desire, and that was to steal them. The prospect was not an agreeable one, but it was certainly preferable to the only alternative. He began to wonder whether stealing clothes was a very difficult accomplishment. It would probably involve house-breaking, a midnight entry into some lonely farmhouse, with the extreme likelihood of finding a dog and a gun to make one welcome.

Well, it was a sporting chance, and anything was better than starving to death in a damp cave, or feebly surrendering himself to the first warder who blundered across his track.

HIS spirits rose at the prospect of action. Perhaps there was a house in view of his present retreat. It would certainly be as well to select his field of operations, if possible, before darkness came on. Creeping cautiously out from the cave, he advanced quickly to the shelter of two large granite rocks which practically concealed his hiding-place. Then, lying flat on the grass, he wriggled himself slowly and carefully forward into the intervening space, whence he could obtain a full view of the moor.

An unexpected discovery rewarded his efforts. About a quarter of a mile away, a man was walking slowly towards him along the moorland track that ran within a few yards of where he was lying. As quickly as possible Martin crawled back again behind the rocks, and crouching down, with all his senses keenly on the alert, he hastily ran over in his mind the possibilities of this new development. From the distant and hurried glance which he had taken, the stranger appeared to be more or less well dressed.

Very probably he would have money. By some simple device—a groan, a low cry for help—he could be enticed up to the rocks; and once there... Martin smiled grimly. If it came to a struggle, he knew that few men would stand much chance against him. Naturally a fine athlete, he had not toiled for two years in the quarries without hardening and developing every muscle in his body. In a few seconds his mind was made up. If robbery had to be done, this open highway variety was infinitely more to his taste than sneaking in through back windows. Noiselessly he crept to the corner of the rocks, where the grass was long, and then, lying down, peered cautiously round. The stranger was standing still about a couple of hundred yards away, vainly attempting to light a pipe. Martin watched him strike two or three matches, but the breeze, which had freshened considerably, seemed to take a malicious pleasure in blowing them out at the critical moment. At last, with a gesture of despair, the would-be smoker abandoned his attempt and looked up as though to discover some more sheltered spot. Martin ducked back just in time to avoid detection.

It occurred to him at once that the stranger would be certain to make for the rocks behind which he was lying. Quickly and silently he regained the shelter of the cave—where, by pressing himself back against the wall, he found that he was completely hidden from anyone outside. Straining his ears, he listened in breathless eagerness for the approach of his quarry. After a moment of almost intolerable suspense—which seemed to him more like an hour—he heard footsteps advancing up the slope that led to his hiding-place. Nearer and nearer they came; and at last, with a brief exclamation of satisfaction, the stranger rounded the rocks and came to a standstill just outside the cave.

"That's better," he remarked aloud; and then he added, apparently for the benefit of the wind: "Now you can blow till you're sick!"

THE remark was so unexpected that Martin almost burst out laughing. Restraining himself with an effort, he

waited until he heard a match being struck, and then stepped quickly from the cave. The stranger, who was standing with his back towards him, wheeled round instantly at the sound, sheltering the lighted match with his hand.

Martin saw a pleasant-looking man of about his own height and age, dressed in a blue serge suit and carrying a small cane, which at present was tucked under his arm. His open, weather-beaten face, frank blue eyes and square chin gave him something of the appearance of a naval officer. The sight of Martin in his convict clothes did not seem to produce in him the faintest sign of either alarm or astonishment. He finished lighting his pipe with the utmost coolness, threw away the match and puffed out a large cloud of smoke.

"Oh," he said, at last, in a kind of relieved tone, "then it was you they were making all that confounded noise about? I couldn't think what was the matter."

"Yes," said Martin dryly, "I am afraid I was responsible. I am sorry it annoyed you."

The stranger waved his hand, as though putting aside the apology. "Not at all," he said; "if there is any inconvenience in the matter I fear it must be yours."

"Not altogether," replied Martin. "I regret to say I find myself in one of those painful positions when it is necessary to be rather a nuisance. To put it plainly, I want your clothes."

The stranger smiled pleasantly, showing a row of strong white teeth. "I don't blame you," he said. "They are certainly nicer than the ones you have on, but unfortunately I want them myself."

"In that case," said Martin, "I shall have to take them."

The stranger looked him up and down with a kind of amused curiosity.

"Why didn't you knock me on the head when I came round the rocks?" he demanded. "It would have been much easier."

"I thought you might have enough sense inside to render such prehistoric methods unnecessary."

"Bravo!" chuckled the stranger. "Mr. Turpin, you have a pretty wit! No wonder your late friends are anxious to re-

cover your society. The prison must be quite dull without you."

Martin measured his opponent with his eyes.

"I ask for clothes, and you give me compliments," he said. "Are you ready?"

THROWING away his cane and carefully placing his pipe on the grass, the stranger drew himself up lightly into a deliberately exaggerated attitude of defense.

"*En garde, M. Turpin!*" he laughed. "And Heaven defend the right!"

Martin realized at once that, despite the mock gesture of his adversary, the latter was no novice in the art of self-defense. There was a quiet confidence in his manner which showed that he, at all events, entertained no doubt as to the outcome of the struggle. Martin himself was a clever boxer, but he had no intention of wasting his time and strength in a trial of skill against his light-hearted opponent. His object was to get at close quarters as quickly as possible.

He advanced rapidly upon the stranger, who stood his ground with a smile upon his face and his fists ready for immediate action. Just outside striking distance Martin paused; and then suddenly dropping his head, and guarding his face with his right hand, he leaped in to the attack. The stranger stepped lightly back, swinging up his left with a quick jolt that would have sent most adversaries sprawling on their backs. Martin was ready for it, however; and in another instant the two men were swaying up and down, locked together in each other's arms.

As far as mere strength was concerned, they were about equally matched, but Martin's knowledge of wrestling—a legacy of private-school days in Cornwall—stood him in good stead. Seizing a chance when his opponent's grip had momentarily slackened, he threw the whole of his strength into one supreme effort and, swinging the stranger clean off his feet, hurled him sideways to the ground. In falling, the latter's head came into violent contact with one of the loose stones which lay scattered about upon the grass. The thick cap that

he was wearing deadened the blow; otherwise he would certainly have been killed. As it was, he lay stunned and motionless, with a thin trickle of blood streaming down his forehead.

Martin, who had fallen onto his hands and knees, was by his side in a moment. A horrible fear flashed through his mind at the sight of his adversary's white and blood-stained face, but a brief examination showed him that the damage was only temporary. There was an ugly bruise and a slight cut just above one of the temples, but Martin knew enough of such matters to be confident that before long the stranger would recover consciousness.

He pulled out the latter's handkerchief, and after wetting it on the damp grass, tied it tightly round his head. Then he picked up the inanimate body in his arms and carried it into the cave.

## II

IT is no easy task to undress an insensible man, especially when one is hampered by the knowledge that at any moment his senses may return. Martin eventually accomplished the feat, though not without considerable difficulty. He then followed suit by hastily discarding his own hated garments.

He felt a certain compunction as he pulled these on to the stranger in place of the less conspicuous costume of which he had deprived him. There seemed to be something mean in thus taking advantage of an unconscious adversary, especially of one who had displayed such cheerful intrepidity. But an escaped convict cannot afford emotional luxuries. So, crushing back his nobler feelings, Martin finished by securely binding the stranger's arms to his sides and placing him inside one of the empty sacks, which he fastened tightly round his shoulders. He then arranged another sack in the form of a pillow, and gently inserted it beneath his prisoner's head.

Having thus guarded himself against any possible consequences of a sudden return to consciousness on the part of the stranger, Martin turned his attention to the latter's clothes. He hastily ran through the pockets, taking out the vari-

ous articles which they contained and laying them on the ground. There was a typewritten manuscript of some sort, two or three letters,—addressed to Captain Maurice Harvey, Bairhill Farm, Upper Torpath, Devon,—a knife, a tobacco-pouch, a matchbox and a small leather purse.

With eager fingers he tore open the last. On its contents hung his chances of escape. A half-crown, a shilling, a strange-looking foreign coin with a hole in it, a threepenny-bit and a farthing rewarded his search.

With a sickening sense of disappointment he turned the purse upside down and then in desperation, ripped out the little leather partitions to see whether he could not discover some cunningly hidden half-sovereign or bank-note. All his efforts were useless, however. Beyond the coins which he held in his hand, the purse contained absolutely nothing. With a bitter laugh, he flung it to the ground.

Three-and-ninepence-farthing! And it was for this sum that he had nearly committed murder! Only the grim humor of the odd ninepence-farthing checked the curse upon his lips.

Fortunately for himself, however, Martin was not the sort of man to worry long over what could not be helped, and almost immediately his naturally buoyant temperament began to reassert itself. After all, he had the clothes: that was something. This thought suddenly suggested to him that he was beginning to feel rather cold—for his present costume, which was strikingly reminiscent of the Garden of Eden, was scarcely suited to the heights of Dartmoor, even in June.

THRUSTING the money into one of the pockets of the waistcoat, he proceeded to dress himself as rapidly as possible in his new clothes. Taking everything into consideration, they fitted him remarkably well. The boots were perhaps a shade too big, and the collar was a trifle too small, but one could hardly expect perfection in such an abruptly acquired outfit. He picked up the stranger's cap and pipe, which were lying on the grass. The former, though

stained with blood inside, bore no exterior marks of the encounter beyond a trifling cut. He laid it on a stone to dry and was just completing the finishing stages of his toilet by attempting to clean his hands in the wet grass, when he heard a faint noise inside the cave.

Entering it at once, he found that his prisoner had recovered consciousness and was staring about him with a kind of dazed inquiry in his eyes.

"Where am I?" he asked. "What has happened?"

"You knocked your head against a stone and stunned yourself," answered Martin. "I have tied it up as well as I could."

A sudden light seemed to break in upon the stranger, and a faint smile crept into his face.

"Why, it's Mr. Turpin! Of course, I remember now." He rolled himself over onto his side and looked Martin up and down. "You have stolen my clothes, you scoundrel!" he added.

Martin reddened.

"I am sorry, but it was necessary," he said briefly. "How do you feel now?"

The stranger moved his head restlessly.

"I've got a confounded headache, but I don't think there is much else the matter." He gave a sort of tentative wiggle, as though to test the strength of Martin's cords. "H'm!" he muttered, sinking back to his original position. "You have got me strapped up safe enough. What do you propose to do next?"

Martin shrugged his shoulders.

"I did intend to make for the nearest station and buy a ticket for London, but the fact of your having only three-and-ninence-farthing puts a stop to that. I suppose I shall have to do some more burglary."

"You should have waited for a few hours until I was coming back," replied the stranger coolly. "I should have had a tenner on me then."

"Where did you expect to get a tenner from in this forsaken part of the world?"

"Expect! Why, hang it, Mr. Turpin, I have the Colonel's promise. And if it comes to that, ten pounds is an uncommon cheap price for acquiring an inti-

mate knowledge of the South Pole."

"The South Pole?" echoed Martin. "What are you talking about?"

It suddenly flashed through his mind that the stranger was becoming delirious.

The latter looked at him in surprise.

"I took it for granted you had waded through my correspondence."

Martin stooped down and picked up the various envelopes which were lying on the grass.

"I don't read other people's letters," he said, "—if these are what you are referring to."

The stranger laughed ironically.

"A thousand apologies, Mr. Turpin. You waylay me on the moor, you break my head, you give me an infernal headache, you steal my clothes; and yet, like a true English gentleman, you return me my correspondence unopened. At last I know the real meaning of *Noblesse Oblige*."

Martin colored again beneath his victim's sarcasm.

"I don't think you are quite fair," he replied coldly. "You must remember I am a runaway convict, in the same pleasant predicament as a mad-dog. You can scarcely blame me if I consider myself at war with a society which is prepared to shoot me at sight. Your clothes and money meant liberty—probably life—to me, and it is scarcely generous of you to jeer at me for taking them when I gave you as fair a chance as I could afford. As you said yourself, I might have knocked you on the head as you came round the rocks. I can assure you that it was not the fear of consequences that prevented my doing so."

THE stranger listened in silence, looking at him with an expression of mingled amusement and interest. He nodded his head approvingly as Martin finished.

"You are quite right, Mr. Turpin," he said; "you acted like a sportsman, and I am sorry for what I said. If it were not for your admirably tied restrictions, I would shake hands with you."

Martin smiled, all his resentment vanishing before the stranger's good-natured reply.

"Thank you," he said simply.

"So you intend going in for burglary now, eh?"

"There is nothing else to be done," answered Martin despondently. "If you had only had a sovereign or so, I'd have made a dash for the railway and chanced it. As it is, I must get hold of some more money first."

"Yes; you're in a bit of a hole," said the stranger musingly. He was silent for a moment, as though pondering over Martin's unfortunate predicament. "By gad! I've got it!" he shouted suddenly, twisting himself round. "Why don't you go into Kingsbridewell and deliver my lecture. They don't know me from Adam, and if you've got the cheek to carry it through, you can walk off with the tenner."

"What lecture?" demanded Martin.

"Why, on the South Pole, of course! I'm Harvey, you know — Captain Harvey!"

Martin shook his head.

"I'm afraid I'm not much wiser."

"Hang it all!" cried the stranger.

"Do you mean to say you've never heard of the Beechcroft-Harvey expedition? Oh, this is adding insult to injury!"

Out of the past a vague recollection suddenly flashed across Martin's mind.

"By Jove, yes!" he exclaimed eagerly.

"Now I come to think of it, I do remember something about your starting. Do you mean to say you reached the Pole?"

"Well, not quite," admitted the Captain modestly, "but very near; to be exact, we got within fifty-four miles and a half—anyhow, we beat everyone but Amundsen and poor old Scott."

"Good!" cried Martin, with enthusiasm. "When did you get back?"

"The end of last January. Since then I've been trotting about the country lecturing. It's not a job I was ever very keen about, but one of those blessed agencies mapped me out a tour and offered me such good terms that I said I'd do it. That's how I come to be here."

"Is this the lecture?" asked Martin, holding up the manuscript.

"That's it, Mr. Turpin; and as I said before, if you want to get hold of the money you had better go on to

Kingsbridewell and spit it out to the Colonel's retainers. In fact, I think it's your duty to, as you've stopped my going."

"Who is the Colonel, and where's Kingsbridewell?"

"One at a time," said the Captain coolly. "As for the Colonel, I don't know much more about him than you do. You can read his letter if you like—the one with the martial-looking fist. I was lecturing at Exeter last Saturday and came on to Upper Torpath for a couple of days on the moor, and somehow or other the old cock got to hear about it—but you can read what he says for yourself."

Martin opened the envelope, which was addressed in a spluttering, aggressive sort of handwriting, and took out the following letter:

The Manor House,  
Kingsbridewell, Devon.  
May 12th.

Dear Sir:

I have heard that you are staying for a few days at Upper Torpath; and as Lord of the Manor in the adjoining village of Kingsbridewell, I should like to express the gratification which we in this neighborhood feel in welcoming you to our midst. In these effete days of socialism, treason, and general decadence, it is so seldom that any exploit by an Englishman is worthy of record that you must pardon us for making the most of a notable exception. On reading the account of your heroic Polar expedition, I felt proud, sir, to claim you as a fellow countryman.

Since purchasing this property, on my retirement from the Army some ten years ago, it has been my constant endeavor to instill a sense of patriotism into the surrounding locality, to teach my tenants and dependents the imperative duty of "thinking imperially," as that great statesman Mr. Chamberlain once expressed it. Now, it has occurred to me that if I could possibly persuade you to come over here one evening and give us that splendid lecture which I had the pleasure of reading in the paper, I should be advancing in the best way possible the cause which I have at heart. Beyond the fact that you would be performing a most patriotic and appreciated kindness, I can, I fear, hold out but little inducement; still, if you would accept the sum of ten pounds for your expenses, I should be most happy to offer it you. Needless to say, we should be delighted to put you up if you would care to stay, or I could drive



you back to Upper Torpath after the lecture, if you would rather return.

With the most sincere congratulations on your gallant accomplishment,  
Believe me, sir,

Yours very truly,

JAMES KELLY MAITLAND, (COL.)

MARTIN read it through to the end and then looked up with a smile.

"Nice, easy, flowing style, hasn't he?"

The Captain laughed.

"Reminds one of a Primrose League dinner. However, ten pounds is always useful, so I wrote to the old boy, saying I would walk across to Kingsbridewell this afternoon, and do my best for him. He sent me another long yarn in reply, full of rot about the enthusiasm in the village at the prospect of my appearance, and finishing up telling me that he and his son would stroll out some of the way to meet me. Well, there's your chance! All you have to do is to meet them, introduce yourself as me, deliver the lecture, collar the tenner and clear out. It's quite possible, if you've got the cheek to carry it through. Of course, if there is anyone there who happens to know me by sight, you'll be badly snookered, but I shouldn't think that was at all likely."

"Where is Kingsbridewell?" asked Martin again.

"About two miles from here, I believe. The path I was following runs straight there, so if you stick to that, you're bound to tumble up against them."

There was a short pause, and then Martin asked bluntly:

"Why are you putting me up to this, after the way I've treated you?"

"It appeals to my sense of humor," replied Harvey calmly. "Besides, you are sure to give the show away; and the sooner you're captured, the sooner I shall be free. I don't mind betting you that you'll be back in the prison before twelve o'clock to-night."

"I'll take your bet," replied Martin promptly. "Doubles or quits on the value of the clothes. I am afraid you'll have to wait for your money, though, if you win."

The explorer looked up at him with a curious expression in which amusement

and admiration struggled for mastery.

"Upon my soul," he said, "I hope I shall lose!"

A sudden flush spread across Martin's sunburnt face, and he lowered his eyes for a moment, as though unwilling to meet his companion's glance. When he raised them again, the ghost of a rather bitter smile flickered round his lips.

"You're a good sort, Captain Harvey," he said. "You have accomplished the really remarkable feat of making a convict feel ashamed of himself. If it wasn't so damned absurd, I would ask you if you—if you could forgive me."

"It all depends on how long I have to stop here," replied the Captain ironically. "Provided you send some one along by to-morrow morning, I sha'n't bear you any permanent animosity."

"Is there anything I can do for you before I go?"

"Yes; you might damp this bandage again and light me a pipe."

"Thanks," he added, when Martin had duly performed these offices. "Now you're off, I suppose? Well, good luck! And don't forget to give my love to the Colonel."

"Right you are," answered Martin. "Good-by."

*"Au revoir, M. Turpin."*

And with this subtle prediction to waft him on his way, Martin stepped out of the cave.

BY this time, in one of those abrupt climatic transitions for which England in general, and Dartmoor in particular, is notorious, the weather had completely changed. The last remnant of mist had disappeared, and from a cloudless sky the afternoon sun streamed down with a grateful and inspiring warmth.

Rounding the boulders, Martin came out into the sunshine. He stood still for one moment, and drawing in a deep breath of the fresh, invigorating air, took a careful survey of the wide sweep of moorland in front of him.

His eyes followed the little path that led to Kingsbridewell. For about half a mile it wound its way across the moor, and then it disappeared suddenly behind some abruptly rising ground. In that



direction lay ten pounds and freedom. For a moment the apparently insuperable difficulties of his enterprise vanished into space, and with a sudden feeling of exhilaration at his heart, he leaped lightly down the slope that separated him from the track.

About seven minutes' brisk walking brought him to the point where the path twisted away to the left. Emerging round the corner of the hill, he found himself at the top of a steep grass slope, dotted all over with huge slabs of granite, like the burying-ground of some forgotten race of giants. About halfway up this, and walking slowly towards him, Martin discerned two figures. One glance was sufficient to convince him that the critical moment had come. The square shoulders, the fierce white mustache, the aggressively military walk, could belong to none other than Colonel Kelly Maitland. His companion was a slim, well-set-up youth of about nineteen, with Sandhurst written plainly all round his personality. Pulling himself together, Martin advanced to meet his fate.

"Captain Harvey, I believe!" exclaimed the Colonel, extending his hand and beaming graciously.

Martin nodded. "And you must be Colonel Maitland!" He shook the proffered hand vigorously. "This is your son, I suppose? How d'you do? I am afraid I am a little late, but the fact is I was not quite certain of the way."

"Ha, ha! That's good!" rejoined the Colonel heartily. "Find the South Pole, but not Kingsbridewell—eh, what? Well, the moor is a bit puzzling to anyone who isn't used to it. We were beginning to wonder whether you'd got bogged or run across the convict."

"What convict?" inquired Martin.

"Why, haven't you heard the prison gun? They only fire it when one of those damned scoundrels escapes."

"Oh! Is that what the noise was about?" said Martin. "I suppose they'll catch him, all right?"

"Oh, yes; sure to catch him. The mounted guards are out all over the moor already. We passed a couple of them outside the village."

"It would be rather a rag if we were

to run across him," observed Kelly Maitland, Jr. "Wish I'd brought my gun! Might have got a pot at the beggar. Have a cigarette, sir?"

He held out a silver case to Martin, who accepted one and borrowing a match, lighted it.

"We had better be getting back," remarked the Colonel, consulting his watch. "The lecture is to start at seven-thirty. I don't know whether you can swallow dinner at half-past six, Captain Harvey? It's an unearthly hour, but we have to hold our entertainments early on the moor—what?"

Martin, whose breakfast had consisted of bread and "skilly," followed by a lunch of soup and suet, expressed his belief that he would be able to tackle the untimely meal; and the three of them turned their steps towards Kingsbridewell.

Being afraid that the conversation would at once drift onto Polar matters, Martin determined to forestall it. It struck him that the topic of Colonel Kelly Maitland would be about as congenial and fruitful a one as he could suggest; and therefore, after making a few conventional remarks on the subject of the weather and the beauty of the moor, he inquired in an apparently casual manner:

"By the way, Colonel, what was your regiment when you were in the Service?"

"The Hundred and Third," returned the warrior, rising briskly to the bait. "The old fighting Hundred and Third. Call 'em the Dublin Fusiliers now, or some such dashed nonsense!"

"A fine regiment," put in Martin.

"When I joined 'em, sir," replied the Colonel with much impressiveness, "they were a regiment. A thousand strong—not one man under six foot—and all with beards down to their waists."

"Beards to their waists!" echoed Martin in astonishment.

"The Mutiny, sir, the Mutiny! I joined as a mere lad, right in the thick of it. No time for shaving with all those damned beggars out. Why, the morning I landed, I saw fourteen of 'em blown from the guns. Gad, sir, we stood no nonsense in those days!"

Once fairly launched on such a congenial topic, the Colonel needed little encouragement to continue talking. He poured out a flood of military and sporting reminiscences that was still in full flow even when the party had reached the straggling main street of Kingsbridewell.

"And there was the dashed fellow lying on the ground where the tiger had mauled him, whining out in his confounded lingo that he was going to die. — That's the schoolroom where the lecture's going to be. See how we've billed you—what? Ha, ha! Good-evening, Edwards. — Well, as I was saying, there he was with Daubeny bending over him trying to see where he was hurt. As soon as I arrived, however, I saw how the land lay. I just said to him, 'Get up, sir, or, by gad, I'll flog the life out of you!' And the beggar hopped up as lively as a twig. I flatter myself I know how to deal with the natives. — Evening Tommy! How's your father?"

THEY turned in at a lodge gate, swung open by a curly-haired boy of about seven, who, after stammering some unintelligible reply to the Colonel's question, stared up at Martin with a look of intense awe. A winding drive led them up to a big, square, weather-beaten house built of granite, with long windows all the same size and an ugly, massive porch, supported by six or seven stone pillars.

"Come in," said the Colonel, swinging open the inside glass door that led into the hall. "Welcome to the Manor House! First time it's sheltered anyone who has been where you've been—eh, what? My dear, let me introduce Captain Harvey. My wife, sir, my wife."

A white-haired lady, with a particularly sweet expression, had come out of one of the rooms.

"How d'you do?" she said, giving her hand to Martin. "It is really too good of you to come to us in this informal manner. We are all looking forward to your lecture immensely."

"Come along into the billiard-room, Captain Harvey," broke in the Colonel. "We have got time for a cigarette before

dinner, and I will show you the skin of that leopard I was telling you about."

"Perhaps Captain Harvey would like a quarter of an hour to himself, George. He may want to rest or make some notes for his lecture."

Martin could have hugged the old lady.

"That's very thoughtful of you, Mrs. Maitland," he laughed. "As a matter of fact, I would rather like the chance of touching up my lecture if there is time. Perhaps I may have a look at that skin later, Colonel?"

"Certainly, certainly, my dear fellow!" cried his host. "Come along; come up to my dressing-room. There is a writing-table there, and I think you will find everything you want."

He led the way up the big staircase, which branched off each side into a gallery, and conducted Martin into his private sanctum.

"Now make yourself at home, wont you?" he said. "You will find writing-paper, ink, pens, everything, I think. However, if there is anything you want, just touch the bell and tell Simpson. Dinner isn't till six-thirty, and we're not dressing, of course. Simpson will show you where you can titivate yourself—what? Ha, ha! See you later."

MARTIN'S first action on being left alone was to sink into an easy-chair and begin to laugh. Indeed, for a moment he felt almost hysterical. He could hardly believe that he had really arrived so far on his adventure safely.

He jumped up and walked across to the looking-glass. The closely cropped head and sunburned face that stared back at him seemed curiously unfamiliar. It was over two years since he had looked into a mirror.

He gazed at his reflection thoughtfully. But for the shortness of his hair, there was nothing in the least suggestive of an escaped convict about his appearance. Being naturally fair and extremely smooth, even the deficiencies of the prison barber failed to be very obvious.

"Still," he muttered, rubbing his hand along his chin, "I could do with a shave before dinner."

Glancing round the room, his eyes fell on the Colonel's dressing-table. Razors, strop, shaving-brush—the whole paraphernalia lay there in inviting readiness. A moment later he had locked the door and set to work.

The improvement in his appearance when he had finished was distinct without being too noticeable, and after hastily obliterating all traces of his toilet so far as the Colonel's belongings were concerned, he flung himself into an easy-chair and pulled out the manuscript of his lecture.

For twenty minutes he read and read, with a furious, concentrated energy that kept him oblivious to everything else. Gifted with a quick, retentive memory, he succeeded in absorbing an amazing knowledge of the typewritten sheets before him. By the time a discreet knock sounded on the door, he was beginning to feel as if he had really written the lecture he was about to deliver.

The bedroom to which he was conducted was the big, comfortably furnished sort of apartment that one generally finds in English country-houses. To Martin, whose toilet arrangements for the last two years had been a trifle primitive, it seemed a positive temple of luxury. He reveled in the beautiful soft carpet, the great copper ewer of hot water, the white, fleecy towels and the delicately scented soap.

He found that his chief difficulty was with his hands. Scrub them as he would, they still bore evident traces of a long period of neglect, and at last he was compelled to abandon his efforts.

"After all," he reflected, "I don't suppose that hunting for the South Pole improves one's finger-nails. Anyhow, they'll have to do."

He finished by brushing his clothes carefully all over; and then, after one last doubtful look in the mirror at his cropped head, he opened the door and stepped out on to the landing. As he did so, the door of the Colonel's room opened, and that vigorous veteran himself appeared.

"Ha, ha! Just timed it," he began. "Hope you found everything you wanted? Good! Well, come along down and have some food. There are

one or two people dining, I believe—the Corvells from Brant, and some of the Princebridge folk. Such a long way for 'em to come, you know, must give 'em something to eat—what?"

Crossing the hall, and flinging open the drawing-room door, he marched Martin in. Silence instantly descended upon the chattering crowd of eight or ten people who were scattered about the apartment, and every eye was eagerly leveled upon the hero of the evening.

Mrs. Maitland again saved the situation.

"Poor Captain Harvey!" she exclaimed, coming forward with her sweetest smile. "It's rather an ordeal. I'm afraid, to be plunged into the middle of us all like this. Let me introduce—"

"Dinner, madam," remarked the somber butler, suddenly appearing through the further doorway.

"I am charmed to meet him," observed Martin gravely.

By a fortunate chance, this somewhat feeble little witticism immensely tickled Colonel Maitland's sense of humor, and under cover of his explosive mirth, Martin hurried through the inevitable introductions. A moment later he was escorting Mrs. Maitland into the dining-room.

WITH the kindly idea of putting his distinguished guest at his ease, the Colonel started the conversation by referring jocularly to the escape of the convict.

"Archie and I were getting quite anxious," he chuckled, "for fear Captain Harvey should have been held up."

"It's just as well I met you when I did," replied Martin coolly. "Otherwise, some enterprising farmer might have arrested me in mistake for the runaway on the strength of my cropped head."

There was a general laugh; and then a serious-looking elderly man, who had been introduced to Martin as Mr. Corvell, observed gravely:

"I should have thought you would have worn your hair long at the Pole, in order to keep your head warm."

"Some of the fellows did," retorted Martin, "and they haven't combed the tangles out yet."

By this time, practically all thoughts of the danger of his position had been merged into a kind of cheerful, half-reckless exhilaration. He felt as a skillful swordsman might when holding his own against tremendous odds.

As dinner went on, he played his part with an ever-increasing confidence, chatting away cheerfully to Mrs. Maitland and entertaining the table in general with mythical stories about his Polar experiences.

Once or twice, when he found everyone leaning forward, listening to his words with that eager deference always paid to a distinguished man, he experienced a kind of mad momentary temptation to jump up and declare himself to be the missing convict. He felt certain that if he did, they would take it as a joke.

The stakes were a trifle too high for such experiments, however, and coffee and cigars arrived without any such dramatic incident having enlivened the conventional course of dinner.

"Time for a short smoke," said the Colonel, as he pushed forward a box of small but excellent-looking Cabañas. "The ladies will be a few minutes putting on their things, and then I thought we might all walk down together—what?"

Martin helped himself, cut and lit his cigar carefully; and then with a faint sigh of satisfaction, he drew in a deep breath of fragrant smoke. For a hunted criminal, he felt remarkably comfortable and secure.

He talked away to the other men until the butler entered the room and announced that the ladies were ready. A minute later he found himself walking down the straggling village street, between his hostess and a pretty, fair-haired girl, who was a daughter of the somber Mr. Corvell, of Brant.

The schoolroom was almost full when they entered it, only the two front rows of chairs remaining unoccupied. The main body of the room was packed with children. At the back sat a couple of dozen villagers and farmers with their wives. In the last row of all, elevated a step above the others, were six or seven servants from the Manor House.

On the platform were a reading-desk and a small wooden table with a chair on each side. The center of the wall behind was covered with a large Union Jack, on the right and left of which were several squares of red flannel bearing the following names in cotton-wool:

<i>Hudson</i>	<i>Frobisher</i>
<i>Scott</i>	<i>Ross</i>
<i>Shackleton</i>	<i>Franklin</i>
<i>Parry</i>	<i>Peary</i>

AS the Manor House party entered, there was a general murmur of excitement, and everyone craned sideways to catch a glimpse of Martin. A short, lean man, with black whiskers and spectacles, scuttled hurriedly down the gangway to meet them.

"Let me introduce Mr. Richards," said the Colonel to Martin; "our schoolmaster—what? Mr. Richards—Captain Harvey."

The lean man bowed and clasped Martin's hand reverently.

"I esteem it a great honor to meet you, sir," he remarked. "We are all looking forward to an intellectual treat."

Having got rid of this carefully prepared phrase, he released Martin's hand, and led the way up the schoolroom with an air of mystery and importance which would have done credit to a churchwarden. Mr. Maitland and the rest of the party settled into their seats, while Martin and the Colonel stepped up onto the stage.

THEIR appearance was the signal for a hearty outburst of applause, started by the schoolmaster and warmly taken up by the children and visitors. Martin sat down on one of the chairs, while the Colonel stepped forward to the front of the stage and held up his hand.

"My friends," he began, "it is my great privilege to introduce Captain Maurice Harvey,"—renewed applause, again started by schoolmaster,— "the hero of the recent magnificent attempt

to discover the South Pole. Ha! H'm! As you all know, or ought to know, Captain Harvey has penetrated—in fact, he actually got within fifty-four and a half miles of the Pole." ("'Ear, 'ear," from a farmer.) "I should like to express on your behalf the gratitude we all feel to Captain Harvey for coming here and giving us his lecture. Captain Harvey is a much-sought-after man just at present; and I am sure you will agree with me when I say—er—when I say—er—how—er—how deeply we appreciate his kindness in coming and telling us about his adventures—what?" (Loud and prolonged applause, during which the Colonel resumed his seat.)

As the clapping died away, Martin took a deep breath, carefully extracted his lecture from his pocket and rising from his chair, stepped forward to the reading-desk. Once again a tornado of enthusiasm broke forth, and for a moment he stood there silent, bowing slightly before this well-deserved, if somewhat mistaken, enthusiasm.

### III

NOW that the supreme moment had come, he still felt perfectly collected. When he opened his lips, his voice, quiet, firm and resonant, penetrated clearly to every part of the room.

The first few sentences he read straight off the manuscript; then, as he warmed to his work, he gradually became bolder. The words which he had so feverishly studied a couple of hours earlier, still stuck bravely in his memory, and by glancing every minute or so at the manuscript, he was able to address the audience directly and to watch the effect of his words.

The lecture was written in a light, breezy, interesting style, well suited for delivery. Martin, who in happier days had had some experience of public speaking, soon felt as much at home as if he had really gone through the adventures he was telling them about. On one occasion he actually threw in a funny story which occurred to him at an apropos moment, his contribution being rewarded with the best laugh of the evening.

The only thing that worried him at all

was the door. From where he stood, he got a clear view of it over the heads of the audience, and all through the lecture he was haunted by the conviction that it would open at the next moment and admit the round caps and dark uniforms of the prison warders. Try as he would, he could not shake off this unpleasant sensation; and when, just as he was finishing, there came a sharp knock from outside, he stopped short with an involuntary start.

Fortunately, however, as is invariably the case under such circumstances, everybody's attention was immediately concentrated on the interruption. They saw Mr. Edwards, the aged caretaker, who was sitting by the door, open it an inch or two and after a brief whispered colloquy with some one outside, shut it again quietly.

With a big effort Martin pulled himself together and recovering control of his audience in a few words, brought his lecture to a triumphant conclusion.

During the acclamation that followed, Mr. Edwards rose from his chair and hobbled up the hall as rapidly as a pair of crooked and rather rheumatic legs would allow him. In his hand he held an envelope.

"For you, sur," he remarked, handing it up to Martin. "Young Jan French ha' ridden across wi' it from Upper Torpath. He be outside."

Martin took it mechanically and disengaging himself with a muttered apology from the vigorous congratulations of his friends, tore open the flap. Inside was a telegram, and the following note:

BAIRHILL FARM,  
UPPER TORPATH.

Sir: The enclose telegram arrive about six o'clock. Thinking it might be important, I have ask John French to ride over with it.

Yours respectfully,  
ELIZA DRAKE.

The telegram, which bore the signature of a well-known firm of concert- and lecture-agents, ran thus:

Birmingham agrees for twenty-eighth—sixty per cent. Wire if agreeable.

It evidently referred to some future arrangement of Harvey's.



"P'r'aps you'd be a-likin' to speak wi' young Jan French, sur?" suggested Mr. Edwards. "Shall I bring un in, then?"

"No, no," answered Martin hastily. "There's no answer. Just thank him very much from me, will you? And ask him to have a drink at the inn." He dived into his pocket and produced Harvey's shilling. "And—er—have one yourself at the same time."

"Nothing serious, I hope—what?" broke in Colonel Maitland, coming up, twitching his mustache.

MARTIN was just about to return a laughing reassurance, when he abruptly checked himself. An inspiration, a very masterpiece in inspirations, had suddenly flashed across his mind.

"Well, it is, rather," he returned coolly. "An important appointment in town first thing to-morrow morning."

"By gad! What a confounded nuisance—eh, what? Must you go?"

"I'm afraid I must, if it's possible."

"Oh, it's possible, right enough—that's to say, you could catch the late train from Tavistock; but, of course, you would have no time to get back to Upper Torpath for your things."

Martin shrugged his shoulders.

"That doesn't matter. I can send out from the hotel for a toothbrush and a clean collar. I suppose there is a vehicle of some sort to be got in the village."

"We can get you into Tavistock all right," rejoined the Colonel. "You needn't worry about that. Here, my dear—and Archie, Archie!" He beckoned to his wife and son, who were chatting with the rest of the party. "Captain Harvey has had a wire calling him to town. He wants to catch the late train from Tavistock. You must run on to the house, Archie, and tell George to get the car ready."

"I'll tootle him in myself!" exclaimed Archie genially, as he prepared to depart. "It's a rippin' evenin', and I'd like a spin!"

"I say, it's awfully good of you all," said Martin apologetically. "I feel a horrible nuisance!"

"Not a bit, not a bit," returned the Colonel. "We're only sorry to lose you so quickly."

"But you will no doubt be in our part of the world again before long?" suggested Mrs. Maitland.

"It's certainly more than possible," replied Martin.

"In that case, you must let us know, wont you? I can't say how much we have all enjoyed the lecture."

"Well, come on up to the house and have a drink before you start," put in the Colonel. "Time for that, anyway."

They passed through the crowd of villagers who hung about the entrance, and retraced their steps up the village street.

"Bring some whisky into the study at once, Simpson," said the Colonel, as the butler opened the door; "and tell 'em to cut some sandwiches for Captain Harvey. He'll be off as soon as the car is ready, so hurry up. By the way," he added, as they entered the room, "before I forget it, let me write you a check. I can't say how indebted I am to you for coming!"

"I am only too delighted to have had the chance," said Martin, in all truthfulness. "By the way, I wonder if you could let me have a sovereign or so in cash? Not expecting to be called away like this, I'm rather short of ready money."

"Certainly, certainly, my dear fellow; why, of course. Where's my pocket-book? Look here, you can have the lot, if you like. You mustn't run short. Here's a fiver, and one, two, three, four, five pounds." He counted out the gleaming coins into Martin's hand.

"Car's ready, Dad!" shouted Archie, pushing open the door.

WITH a word of thanks, Martin stuffed the money into his pocket, and took up the glass of whisky-and-soda that his host poured out.

"Good luck!" he said cheerfully.

"And may we soon see you back on the moor!" replied the Colonel. Which was, perhaps, not quite such a kindly sentiment as he meant it to be.

Martin thoroughly enjoyed the long run into Tavistock. The car was a powerful twenty-eight-horsepower Napier, and it swept up the steep hill with scarcely a perceptible effort. Wrapped



up in one of the Colonel's greatcoats, he leaned back in his softly padded seat and admired the skill and confidence with which Archie handled the wheel.

"Motorin's simple enough when you understand it," said the latter. "I always had a turn for this sort of thing from the time I was a kid. Wanted to be a sapper myself, only Dad had set his heart on my going into his old regiment."

He twisted the car sharply round an abrupt curve; and there, three or four hundred yards ahead, they suddenly caught sight of one of the mounted guards. He was stationed on a crag above the road, grimly outlined against the summer twilight, like some dark equestrian statue. Before Martin had time to realize that his heart was in his mouth, the car had covered the intervening distance. As they flashed past, the man reigned up his horse and raised his hand to a salute.

"Beggars still about, evidently," remarked Archie, slackening off the pace slightly as they commenced the long descent into Tavistock.

"I wonder he didn't stop us," said Martin, trying to speak as coolly as possible.

"Oh, all the warders know me, and they all know Dad's car," returned Archie complacently. "Dad has given them leave to shoot rabbits over some of his property alongside the prison fields. We own all the moor about there that doesn't belong to the Duchy. Most of the ground you came over to-day is our property."

"By the way, that reminds me," said Martin with a slight start, "—I wonder if you would do me another good turn to-morrow."

"Why, of course; I'll be glad to. What is it?"

"About half a mile from where I met you and your father, there is a big collection of rocks, just off to the right of the path."

"Yes; Cimmsons Clitter, they call it."

"Well, I went up there to get out of the wind, so that I could light a pipe, and I foolishly left my knife behind. Do you think you could send some one

for it to-morrow, and post it to me at Upper Torpath?"

"Certainly!" exclaimed Archie, pulling up the car outside the station. "I'll send John over first thing in the morning."

Leaving the motor in charge of a cabman who was standing outside, they entered the booking-office.

"First for Waterloo," said Martin, putting down a fiver.

The clerk looked at it for a moment with a kind of half-doubtful, half-vacant air, and then invited Martin to write his name and address on the back. The sight of

CAPTAIN M. HARVEY,  
Bairhill Farm,  
Upper Torpath,

seemed to reassure him, for he passed over the ticket and change without further remark.

Martin and Archie sauntered through to the platform, where some half a dozen travelers were waiting for the train. Their vigil was not a long one. A signal clicked; a bell rang; and a few minutes later the express puffed its way into the station and drew up with a jerk.

"Here y'are, sir!" shouted a porter, flinging open the door of a carriage. "Only waits a minute, sir."

Martin jumped in, and after tipping the man, leaned out of the window to shake hands with Archie.

"I won't forget about the knife," said the latter.

"Thanks," answered Martin. "I should be sorry if anything happened to it. So long!"

"So long!"

THE train steamed slowly out of the station with Martin still leaning on the carriage-door. Archie waved good-bye to him and then proceeded to fill and light a pipe before returning to the motor.

"Decent chap, that," he murmured to himself. "Hope I'll see him again!"

But he never did. Neither, we may incidentally remark, did His Majesty's Government.



# The Cruise of the *Silversea*

*A good old-fashioned tale of the Spanish Main, and of shipwreck  
and buried treasure and the rescue of a maid in distress.*

By Frederic Reddale

Author of "Marooned," "The Adventures of Matt Bardeen," etc.

**S**UDDENLY the long, heavily-raftered room rang with uncouth and savage uproar. From the hairy throats of the crew of the *Silversea* there proceeded a Babel of coarse, deep-sea expletives and hoarse growlings, while fists and pewter ale-mugs were thumped on the battered oaken table.

Awakened by the tumult from where I had been curled up asleep on a wide settle almost within the chimney-breast itself, I sprang to my feet and blinked at the assemblage, wondering what had happened to unleash the passions of these Cornish sea-wolves—fishermen, smugglers and wreckers.

Evidently my *pater*, Captain Drake Davenant, had been laying down the law to these otherwise lawless beauties, but what he said must have been received with crass disfavor. However, he now slowly rose to his more than a dipsy fathom of height, all knotted and gnarled with rheumatism, grizzled and scarred through nigh upon sixty years of battling with the cruel seas of the Western Ocean ceaselessly battering our stern and rock-bound coast. As

he bent forward, his eyes flashing balefully from under the penthouses of his heavy eyebrows, the disturbance died away, tankards were held poised halfway to ever-thirsty lips—only his kinsman and mine, Skene Pendragon, regarding the leader truculently, growling the while behind his black beard.

"Hearken, lads," my father went on. "Tisna because I winna, but because I canna. Full well I'd hoped to lead ye on one more gallant cruise—but I'm old and broken, lads, a sore-sick man, mayhap a dyin' man."

Skene Pendragon sprang to his feet, sending his chair crashing to the earthen floor behind him. From the leathern belt at his hip there came a quick flash of steel, and like a sinister red meteor its cunningly-flung blade stuck quivering and humming in the table-top, a gage of defiance.

"Hell's bells!" he shouted, "we've had enow of this shillyshally! Ye can't put us off with old-wives' excuses no longer, Drake Davenant! The treasure's there or thereabout, as you've told us often enow, and as that blessed scrap o' parchment avers. Give us a

navigator—that's all we ask! Then ho! for the Spanish Main, the yellow doubloons an' the jooled-crosses an' crucifixes! Then home agen wi' a full hold, to live like lords the rest of our days ashore, spendin' the ducats like gallant an' gallus-free companions!"

A shout which made the rafters ring and set the pots and pans round about the chimney-piece to jingling softly showed how deeply Skene's speech appealed to his auditors. Then there fell another silence as my father's eyes quellingly swept each man in turn.

JUST at that tense moment my mother's pet starling, in his wicker cage hanging on the wall, set up a-whistling the rollicking old melody of "Lilliburlero," whereat all hands laughed with evident relief, and the dangerous moment was averted, like tacking ship off a lee shore.

"Put up your dirk, Skene Pendragon," commanded my father sternly. "We'll have no bickering or knife-play at the Crag Farm while I'm alive to say you nay. And hark ye, lads," he went on, with a sweep of his long arm which included the double row of hard-bitten sea-dogs facing him. "Not a man-jack of ye touches a groat of Harry Morgan's hoard unless I or mine say the word! Ye can take your Scripture oath to that—from Skene Pendragon t' the meanest fo'c'sle hand! But I'm wi' ye, lads,"—touching his broad chest with a gesture infinitely eloquent and pathetic,—"though I'm tied here ashore helpless as a fitch o' dead bacon."

Signs of unrest again became apparent, as though all hands were impatient and feared another preaching for delay. Seeing which the old West Country man went on more alertly:

"The *Silversea*'s mine; the secret of the treasure's mine; only a man of Davenant blood can or shall lead ye to it! But always I've promised ye fair, lads, and fair I'll be to the end. Ye were wanting a navigator awhile back, and ye'll need a leader, a captain, who'll do what's right by them that sails and by him that stays to home. I'll give ye both! There he stands, my son Blake Davenant, a clever dog with sextant and cross-staff, as true a lad and as

brave a seaman as ever sailed the roaring forties! Stand forth, lad!"

For a third time the kitchen of Crag Farm echoed to the shouts which now acclaimed my succession and the allegiance of these brave and desperate hearts in the coming venture. Even Skene Pendragon could not object to the choice, for in that far western corner of England, near to the Land's End and the Scillies, we were a band of loyal and tight-gripped clansmen.

As I stood blinking in the light of the leaping flames, my heart went pit-a-pat—not with fear, you may be sure, since the Davenant breed isn't built that way, but with pride and excitement that I, a stripling of twenty-six, should be so suddenly elevated to the command of an expedition that promised all sorts of adventure, with heaping handfuls of treasure to sweeten the toil and mayhap the fighting.

Leaping to their feet, with pewter mugs raised high in air, the bullies toasted their new captain and leader in a lusty chorus.

"Three cheers for Cap'n Blake!" "Here's to ye, lad!" "Blake's the boy to lay a fair course for the ileyand!" "Young Davenant's the man for me!"—and such like.

So that's how I became captain of the *Silversea* and leader of the little expedition to lift Sir Harry Morgan's treasure, which was believed to be cached on Cayman Cay somewhere off the Spanish Main. In a week we were afloat and steering sou'-sou'-west for the blue Caribbean.

THE foregoing night scene took place in the summer of 1745—the year of the last great Stuart rebellion, when all England and Scotland were in throe. We of the West had not been harried since Monmouth's rising and the Bloody Assize sixty years before, and had small desire to be mixed up in any of the political hurlyburly of the day. So long as we were left free to fish, to run our cargoes of wine, brandy and lace from France to our caves in the chines and gullies, to take our pickings from the wrecks that came ashore, or to adventure occasionally as far as the Virginia Plantations or the West

Indies, we cared little whether Stuart or Hanoverian reigned at Westminster.

We were a hard-bitten lot, I dare say, though some of the best blood in England ran in our veins. The Davenants had ruled and tilled the Crag Farm since Bluff King Hal's time, and many a lad from Mullion Cove went to man the fleets of Drake and Raleigh and that puny sea-force which worsted the Great Armada. Indeed, my father was named after Sir Francis Drake himself, while I was not a whit less honored in bearing the name of that other stout English admiral, who trounced Dutch and Spaniard alike.

Now, the Crag Farm stood a-crest of the cliffs bordering Mount's Bay in Cornwall. Mullion Cove here ate far into the land, making a clever and almost secret haven for our luggers and trawlers. The cliffs abounded in caves hollowed out by countless centuries of beating surges; cunningly contrived rude staircases or artificial galleries often connected these rabbit-holes, one of which might be entered from a trap-door in the very kitchen of Crag Farm itself. No better smugglers' retreat existed all round the coast, from Beachy Head to Bishop's Rock; and so, the soil of Crag Farm being somewhat rocky and sterile, the best crops we raised consisted of contraband in kegs and cases from France. It was accounted no sin, in those days, to beat the "preventive men," as the revenue coast-guards were called, and the dangerous life bred a hardy and dashing set of seafarers of whom for many years Drake Davenant and Skene Pendragon, own cousins, had been leaders.

Crag Farm belonged to the manor of Sir Norrie Trelawney of Helston Hall, between whom and the Davenants there ran a thin scarlet thread of relationship on the distaff side. As a boy, I had been ever welcome at the Hall, and indeed studied my accidence, my history and mathematics, my reading and penmanship, under the same gentle clergyman-tutor that taught Mistress Alice Trelawney. But that would be all of ten or twelve years ago. Though she and I had studied

side by side out of the same book, gone birds'-nesting among the chines, or scampered over the country on our tough little Dartmoor ponies, the day dawned when the fair Alice let down her frocks and put up her hair, blossoming almost overnight into a demure and very beautiful damosel with whom I promptly fell head over heels in love. I was then turned sixteen, a very lump of a lout physically, and therefore never daring to declare my passion, not a whit loath to quit squireing Mistress Alice Trelawney about the country and go to sea, as my forbears had done, making many trips to the coast of France and a few deep-water voyages, learning the while to handle anything under sail from a ketch to a full-rigged ship, and by dint of my former mastery of mathematics becoming no mean navigator—all of which in a way fitted me to step into my father's sea-boots on the quarter-deck of the nimble *Silversea*.

Meanwhile Sir Norrie Trelawney had been created governor of His Majesty's island of Jamaica, so we of Mullion Cove and they of Helston Hall saw little of each other. Mistress Alice went to Court, and after spending two or three years in Jamaica, had returned home on account of the climate. The Lady Trelawney died, and now it was bruited about that Sir Norrie himself was invalided, and that Miss Trelawney had set sail from Falmouth in a government ship to accompany him back to England.

THE *Silversea* fared forth from Falmouth on the tenth of June in the year aforesaid, whence a month earlier the *Vixen*, His Majesty's twenty-one-gun frigate, had sailed for Kingston bearing Alice Trelawney.

We tallied twenty of a crew—ten of them, including myself, Skene Pendragon and Michael Doone, Mount's Bay fellows from Penzance, Marazion, Helston and Mullion Cove. The rest of our quota was made up of dock-side recruits whom Skene had picked up at Falmouth—a lot of hard-bitten, wide-breeched, mahogany-faced, pig-tailed bullies, the very men, in truth, for such a venture as ours. Doubtless

Skene could have recruited twice the number required, since you've only to whisper "buried treasure" along any waterfront from London to Shanghai, or from Boston right around to Valparaiso, to get a crew.

Once clear of the land, we trimmed ship, divided the watches, and thenceforth really ran under buccaneer law—every man as good as the rest and a little better, with allegiance only to the actual elected or appointed head of the expedition,—myself,—although for appearance' sake we had taken on a small cargo of merchandise and our manifest stated that we were trading to the West Indies—a sufficiently indefinite port of call.

For a month all went happily as marriage bells. The *Silversea* was a converted French lugger originally named *Le Grand Monarque* of some six hundred tons, which we men of Mullion Cove had captured two years ago. 'Twas a saying in those days that the French built speedy ships for Englishmen to sail—and it proved true in our case.

I protest there was nothing faster afloat after we changed her rig. We sent down her great and unwieldy lateen sails on main and mizzen, rigging in their stead Christian fore-and-aft canvas; then on her foremast we swung a big foresail, topsail and topgallant, gave her a long, high-raking flying jibboom with the proper headsails,—forestaysail, jib and flying jib,—rechristened her *Silversea* with a bottle of French brandy—oh, the sheer irony of it—smashed on her forefoot, and lo, as sweet a craft was born as any sailorman would wish to see. She was stoutly and heavily built, with lots of brass-work and gimcrackery about her decks, and four eighteen-pound carronades of a side, including a long-tom swivel-gun on her fo'c'sle. Indeed, the new *Silversea* was a most ideal and wicked-looking picaroon.

In the cabin aft there berthed Skene Pendragon and Michael Doone, second and third in command, with myself, Captain Blake Davenant, long since at your service, and here also, in an oak-bound chest, with the ship's money and papers, was the talisman around

which our whole voyage and the hopes of the motley crew were centered. For, according to the free-companion law of the high-seas in those days, every man Jack in our ship's company stood to receive a certain moiety of the loot—whenever we got it!

AND this brings me to the history of the parchment itself to which I have heretofore alluded. Thirty years anent the date of this tale my dear father, Drake Davenant, while voyaging to the Antilles, had been cast away on a sand-spit in the Bahamas with a seaman much older than himself, who in turn had been Sir Harry Morgan's right-hand man at the sacking of Portobello, Panama, and other luckless Gulf cities.

Before Morgan—who was a most bloody and relentless foe to the Spaniards—settled down and became respectable, ending his days with the royal pardon as Governor of Jamaica under the King's own warrant, he had amassed vast wealth, part of which undoubtedly went to placate his judges at Whitehall. Some of this treasure, the fruit of repeated sacking of Spanish galleons and settlements, he had secreted from time to time in hiding-places known only to himself. This practice was common to all the great buccaneer captains. Their ships were small—often not much bigger than a North River brick-schooner—and leaky from worms and long service in tropic waters. When full up, it therefore behooved them to sail with clean-swept holds in search of fresh conquests.

At such times,—as did Mansfield and Blackbeard, Teach and Kidd,—the overplus of gold, silver, jewels and other more perishable loot would be cached in some little-frequented spot along the American freeboard, from the Gulf itself to Gardiner's Island. At times, a rude map would be made on some such fragment of paper or parchment as hap made available; at others, the chief trusted solely to his memory—which latter fact explains why so many traditional buccaneer hoards have to this day never been found.

Now, to return to our muttons,—which I am told is polite French for



resuming the main theme,—the *pater*, having nursed and finally buried Morgan's old retainer on that desolate Bahama islet, received from his dying lips this strange yarn:

It seemed that after the taking of Portobello, and the sack of Panama over, Morgan steered for a desolate cay somewhere in the Caribbean southwest of the Isle of Pines, and there beached his vessel, landing her guns and two chests of treasure on the shore. These latter, one day, when the ship was ready to sail, he caused to be carried to the highest point of the cay by two of his crew. On a little eminence crowned by an abandoned fort, Morgan made the two seamen dig a trench, and therein plant the heavy oaken chests. When all was done to his liking, he bade the fellows proceed to fill up the hole, but as they were in the act of stooping over their spades to lift the first shovelful of sand, their ruthless commander drew pistols and shot them both. Their bodies fell into the cavity atop of the treasure, after which Morgan himself proceeded to bury all, and callously take his departure, secure in the belief that no living man knew the secret of that particular treasure, doubtless intending at some future day to return and unearth the hoard.

**B**UT Morgan's cruelty and cupidity for once had led him astray. My father's informant, it seemed, had been only stunned with a scalp shot; miraculously coming to his senses, he had managed to heave himself free of the friable sand, but only in time to shake his fist at the retreating ship. However, he was ultimately rescued by a native fishing-crew from the neighboring mainland, keeping his secret in the hope of some day being able to retrieve the loot for himself. That chance never came, as it happened. Being merely a common sailor, with no education, all he was able to give to Drake Davenant was a general outline of the locality—so many days' sail from the Isle of Pines on such-and-such a course, so many more to the Spanish Main, where the natives finally landed him.

Yet he was able to describe the contour of the cay, with certain compass

bearings and some equally valuable landmarks. All of which my father, being an expert navigator, treasured in his mind, and when he in turn was rescued from playing *Crusoe* in the Bahamas, he set them down at the first opportunity with full faith that his shipmate had told truth. There was, naturally, the chance that Sir Harry Morgan had himself secretly returned and lifted the loot; but weighing all the probabilities it looked like a monstrous good gamble that the treasure would still be there.

One thing especially impressed itself upon my father's memory, and that was the form of the island. The old sailor said that it was shaped like an alligator—long, narrow, curving, tapering from head to tail, with wide-open jaws; at the crotch of the jaws, so to speak, the chests were buried. So it was that in the rude and necessarily imperfect map which Drake Davenant drew from memory, the islet was named Cayman Cay—the native name in those parts for the alligator. No exact latitude or longitude was given,—only general sailing directions,—but provided Cayman Cay still reared its tropic head above the blue Caribbean, neither my father, nor I, his son, nor Skene Pendragon, doubted that it could be found by gridironing that part of the ocean.

That, then, was our lodestone. Again and again in the weeks when we were running down our latitude, we three leaders would get our heads together over the cabin table in the *Silversea* and probe and ponder the courses to be steered once we were in the right waters, and our chances of ultimate success. For one and all we felt, like the bullies in our 'tween decks, that this venture would make us or break us.

In a sense all this was idle speculation, for were we not bound upon a wild-geese chase? And I well minded me of that story of Jason and the Golden Fleece which long years ago I had studied cheek by jowl with pretty Alice Trelawney back there in the musty old library of Helston Hall.

Well, there was nothing but peace and quietness for this part of our traverse. The bullies in the 'tween decks gambled and fought and swore,



some of them losing their share in Morgan's gold ere ever their ten finger-bones had touched it. We of the after-guard behaved ourselves more seemly, as befitted grave and dignified leaders, smoking our long pipes and even engaging from time to time in a gentlemanly game of piquet in imitation of our betters ashore.

The *Silversea* proved herself a veritable witch for sailing in that long stretch across the Biscayan Bay from Finisterre, from which we took our reckoning in those days, to the latitude of the Cape Verdes. There were times when I as navigator was almost ashamed to disclose the wonderful runs we had made from noon to noon. And in that happy trait of the bonny keel that bore us was to be found the germ of an idea which afterward stood me in good stead, of which more anon. She ought to have been named "*Silverheels*," I told myself.

WE were in latitude thirty-one degrees and twenty minutes north and longitude fifty-two degrees thirty minutes west, two hundred leagues to the eastward of the Bermudas, when we met up with our first tragic event. Night had fallen quickly, according to wont in those sub-tropic seas, and the bell on the main-deck had tolled thrice, denoting that the hour was half-past nine of a glorious midsummer night. Skene Pendragon had the deck, and *Silversea* was slipping through the slightly crested seas before the first of the northeast trades, with all sail set and drawing nobly. Myself I was lying down in my cubbyhole of a bunk, thinking that the Frenchman never knew how to make himself comfortable at sea, when I heard a hail above my head, evidently from the fo'c'sle watch to the quarter-deck. I leaped to my feet and hurried to the companion-way, which, contrary to our English fashion, opened forward. Almost the first sight which met my sailorman's instinctive glance around, after my eyes had become accustomed to the blackness of the night, was a ruddy glow in the sky away off to the south'ard about three points on our labboard bow, as we called it then, our

left hand looking forward, and what is now dubbed "port."

"Ship afire!" said Skene in my ear, almost needlessly, for the veriest land-lubber would have known that nothing else—unless it had been a volcano—could produce that dull red glow of smoke streaked with radiance. We were heading almost fair for the glare, and I ordered the helm shifted so as to bring our course a couple of points nearer, but still keeping the windward gage so that we could run down abreast if necessary without going about.

We held on in this way for perhaps an hour, all hands gathered in the waist, raising the burning ship in that space, so that with the aid of a night-glass we could see her spars and the showers of sparks shed by her burning tarry cordage. But while we were at least ten or twelve miles off, her hull still sunk below the narrow sea-rim, she blew up with an appalling ventage of hellish flame and smoke. Being still some distance to windward, there was quite an interval before the report reached us like some sullen solitary thunder-clap. Then total blackness!

"A king's ship!" exclaimed Michael Doone. "That's her magazine! God help the poor devils aboard of her if they haven't taken to the boats!"

Greatly to my disgust,—for I was instantly for driving *Silversea* to the scene of disaster,—on looking aloft and around I found the wind had scanted, giving us barely steerage way, as though the vortex created by the explosion of a hundred tons of powder aboard the doomed ship had sucked the trade-wind dry. In less than an hour a dead calm prevailed, and our canvas, both square and fore-and-aft, was slatting ruinously against the spars. Had we been a canny merchantman, I'd have given the order to clew up and haul down, but something impelled me to withhold the order, since somewhere within the radius of vision from our mastheads, had it been day, I felt there might be boats in sight. And although our mission was not exactly one which made it wise to augment our ship's company by either crew or passengers, humanity forbade us to leave any souls to perish could we be of service.

ALL the rest of that black and sultry night I kept the deck, and there reigned a flat calm. The *Silversea* swung in short circles on her own heel. Not till the rising sun flashed out of the African sands far to the eastward did the usually steady trade resume its blowing. Our course, perforce, would be the same as when we had caught sight of the burning ship, since any escaping boats could not have made much headway from the scene of the disaster. So I ordered a hand—a Mullion Cove lad—aloft to the foretopmast cross-trees with my best glass and instructions to sweep the dancing radiant crests ahead. In less than half an hour came the hail:

"On deck there! A ship's boat two points on the weather beam!"

I stepped to the binnacle and took bearings. A small pull on the braces would bring the craft almost dead on end.

"Aloft there!" I volleyed back. "Keep that boat in sight and con us as we go!"

A wave of the hand told me that I was understood, and I turned to confront Skene Pendragon, his face black as a thunder-cloud, having come straight from his bunk.

"What's this, Blake?" he growled. "We don't want any prying eyes aboard the *Silversea*. I tell ye, man, the bullies forward wont like the notion. There's enough pockets to fill as we go."

I may as well confess here and now that there was never any love lost between me and Skene Pendragon. True, he was my senior by a half a score of years and my kinsman also. But ever since that scene in the old kitchen at the Craig Farm I had thought to detect an undercurrent of disloyalty to me and mine. Besides, I was the better sailor-man, the real commander of the expedition, and the only navigator. So I answered him shortly.

"You heard the orders, Mister Pendragon? I'm still in command, I believe? Wait until we bring that boat abreast before you prate of prying eyes or extra hands. Let me tell you that if life is to be saved from yonder burning craft—be they one or be they a hundred

—no ship of mine shall turn them adrift or sail away without giving succor!"

Seeing the temper in my face and voice, Skene shrugged his shoulders, stuffed his hands in the pockets of his baggy coat, and walked to the break of the poop, where he could look down on our main deck crowded with hairy faces all looking rather menacingly aft. I knew just what ailed them. There might be survivors afloat within a few miles of us, especially if the disaster had befallen an armed vessel, as the explosion would seem to indicate. In which case,—although it was a childish and picayune fear, since we could easily land them all long ere we came up with Cayman Cay,—there might be so many more to go shares. But these free companions of the sea were always just like that, contemptibly mean and gloriously lavish by turns.

The *Silversea* was slipping nobly along. Soon we could make out the black speck of a boat from the deck level. There was nothing else in sight, said the man aloft, and evidently the wretches aboard, seeing succor near, had quit rowing. I jumped on the bulwark so as personally to con the ship as we closed with the boat. By giving *Silversea* a wide sheer, then flattening in the after canvas, clewing up the top-sails, and backing our big foresail, I managed to come almost to a standstill, with the boat under our lee channels where I could look right down into her. She held three persons only, two women and a man—and one of the women was my old playmate and sweetheart, Mistress Alice Trelawney!

WHEN I got the tragic story from her own sweet lips I found that the burned ship was in truth the *Vixen*, which had left Falmouth a month ahead of *Silversea* and which we had overhauled through having the better heels. Again and again did I bless my stars that we happened in the neighborhood of the disaster. The fire, it appeared, first caught from a naked candle in the hold, thence by leaps and bounds spread to the 'tween decks, exploding the magazine in the ship's bowels before the boats could be

manned and ordered away. Mistress Trelawney, her maid, an apple-cheeked lass, named Polly Quench, from Penzance, and one seaman, a grizzled old quartermaster named Thomas Twiddy, had been assigned to the captain's gig at the outbreak of the conflagration and towed astern. But the explosion had come so quickly that the entire complement of officers, crew and marines must have perished. Indeed, the gig itself had only escaped through being sheltered by the overhang of the stern gallery, which in those days and in most great ships ran around the captain's quarters aft.

Well, in a brace of days Mistress Alice was sufficiently recovered from her fright to come on deck. Perhaps I should record that I gave her and Polly Quench my own cabin. Tom Twiddy I sent forward among the crew, where he was received with surly glances, hostile hunched shoulders and halted conversation. In fact, every man on board, and especially Skene Pendragon, in those days immediately following the rescue, went about wearing a savage scowl. Had it not been that I was the only navigator on board, and alone could pilot them to Harry Morgan's treasure, I doubt not that they would have called a council, imitating the buccaneer fashion, and served me with the "black spot"—in other words, notice that I was deposed. But, despising their surliness and secure in my own strength, I took no notice so long as the ship's duty went along smoothly.

MISTRESS TRELAWNEY, for whom I had an awning rigged on the poop,—amid much growling and under-breath cursing from the two bullies told off for the job,—spent long hours on deck. One day—it was the twelfth of July, to be precise—I had gone below to work out my sights, and coming on deck to order the helm shifted by a couple of points, she wanted to know where we then were. I told her in terms she could comprehend.

"Your ship sails very swiftly, Captain Davenant," she commented. "At this rate we shall soon be at Kingston.

I do hope we'll arrive before news of the *Vixen's* loss reaches Papa."

"Captain Davenant?" I queried, sitting down beside her, not relishing the formal title, and resolved, since chance had thrown us together again, to endeavor to resume our old familiar footing. But, womanlike, she chose to fence and willfully misunderstand my real meaning.

"Why, you *are* captain, are you not?"

"Yes, but it used to be 'Blake' and 'Alice' not so very long ago," I reminded her, dropping my voice so that the man at the wheel and Skene Pendragon, pacing to windward, might not overhear.

"Oh,"—with a flirt of her pretty head and a slight mantling of color in her cheeks,—“that's long and long ago. We were both children then, *Captain Davenant*."

"Then I wish we'd never grown up," was my meaningful, low-voiced retort. But she declined to be led into that strain of converse. Instead:

"How long before we reach Kingston?" she queried. "You are bound there, I think you said?"

"Nay, Miss Trelawney, I told you we were consigned there."

"It's the same thing, isn't it?"

"Not exactly—not with the *Silversea*—not this voyage." To all hands, myself included, our manifest was simply a blind; we had all along resolved to touch no land save Cayman Cay until we arrived home at Mullion Cove with the gold and jewels in our hold. Whether, in justice to others, or without their consent, I was justified in telling the girl the truth was debatable ground with me. What I secretly hoped and intended was to sight and tranship her to some other vessel, outward bound if possible, homeward bound if no other keel offered.

"But I do not understand,"—her gray-blue eyes clouding in perplexity and her bosom rising and falling fitfully.

"Nor can I explain, Miss Trelawney. But of this be assured,"—as I rose to join Skene Pendragon, who was casting dagger glances in our direction,—“as long as you are in my charge your

safety and comfort shall be assured so far as in my power lies." With this, making her a stiff bow, I left her. If so be she wanted to keep me at arm's distance, I told myself, in high-stomached dudgeon, well and good. I'd managed to get along for ten years without Mistress Alice Trelawney, and could doubtless contrive to exist for another decade or more. When next I turned in my walk she had gone below.

IT was now Skene Pendragon's turn. "Hell's bells!" he broke out. "This comes of playing gallant! Why couldn't you let well enough alone, Blake Davenant? We don't want any prying passengers this voyage. The men forrard don't like it! There's that lobster Twiddy nosin' around tryin' to pick up crumbs—already he smells a rat, the bullies being so sulky an' close-mouthed. What's to be done? I vote we set 'em adrift!"

"If you do, overside I go with them," looking him full in the face, "and then where will be you and *Silversea*?"

"You'd never do it, Blake," he scoffed. "Always you were daffy about the petticoats, and Mistress Alice in particular. What sort of tale would it be to carry home to your father—that you'd deserted the cruise 'count of a pretty face? No, you'd never do it." And he spat contemptuously.

"Nor would you dare carry out your threat, my friend," I reminded him, thinking I had the upper hand, "so keep a civil tongue behind your teeth."

"Well, 'tis no use snarling at each other like a couple o' mangy curs," he conceded, smothering his black rage. "The point is, what's t' be done? I vow we want no wenches t' see our goings on at Cayman Cay an' bruit it all abroad afterward—an' Sir Norrie Trelawney the king's governor!"

"Leave it to me, Skene," I counseled, more sedately. "It's my intention to transfer them to the first ship that heaves in sight, no matter which way she's headed."

"Thunder and guns! There it is again!" he sputtered. "We run a big risk in letting them go, after what

they've seen and heard already. There's that Tom Twiddy going around with both ears pinned back, wondering what kind of a voyage is ours, and piecing bits of things together! Suppose it's a king's ship? First thing you know we'll be overhauled and searched, then there's the very Old Scratch to pay!"

"That's a chance we must fain take," I responded coolly, "but I believe you overrate the danger."

"Look ye to it, then, Blake Davenant," he growled threateningly. "If aught goes wrong wi' the cruise, you'll be held responsible."

"And as long as I'm in command," was my rejoinder, taking him at his word, "the burden is mine!"

Skene took a few turns about the deck, then spoke again:

"Smite me, Blake, if we don't sight a ship, what's to hinder our running in well under the land some dark night, off Jamaiky or Cuba or Hispaniola, and sending all three of 'em ashore? That way there'd be no risk to their precious lives."

"I'll think of it; perhaps it may come to that, after all"—turning on my heel to go below after a look around at the brilliant tropic scene of high trade-clouds scurrying stately across the blue over the horizon-wide vista of wind-whipped and foam-crested dark-blue surges. Of a truth, I was more puzzled than I cared to admit, for I felt in my bones that trouble was brewing. The starling hanging in his cage on the bulkhead, which my mother had insisted on my carrying along for good luck, set up a merry whistling of the lilt "Lilliburlero." In my then frame of mind I took it as an evil omen—for had not the air set a whole kingdom by the ears?—and would fain have wrung the poor chancy bird's neck.

MY noon shooting of the sun on July twentieth found *Silversea* in north latitude eighteen degrees and forty minutes, longitude eighty-seven degrees thirty minutes west—there or thereabouts. We had long left the Windward Islands astern; the Greater Antilles lay far to the north—and with them had passed all chance of setting our passengers ashore. The trades had

blown so spitefully, raising such shrewd seas, that no boat could have lived in the shore breakers, and we did not dare or desire to make port in the regular way. Nor in all those weeks did we raise a single sail.

The situation on board the barkentine grew tense with anxiety, most of the crew snarlingly ugly, and ready for any mischief which would rid us of the two women and old Tom Twiddy. Him they would have incontinently knocked on the head and pitched overboard had any such devilry bettered our case, but Mistress Alice Trelawney and Polly Quench and myself would still have to be reckoned with, and the desperadoes of Skene's enlisting were not quite equal to making them walk the plank, buccaneer fashion. My heart was full of anxiety, for the nearer we drew to where I figured Cayman Cay to be the more certainly I foresaw trouble.

Hence, to gain time, I put into force the device at which I hinted a few pages back. In a word, I falsified the daily run of *Silversea*, keeping double reckoning, one in my head of our true speed, the other lopping off many knots for pricking on the chart which Skene Pendragon and Michael Doone insisted on inspecting for the crew's behoof. Consequently on the day I have named we were a full hundred leagues farther to the west and nearer the problematical position I had guessed for the island than any soul on board save myself suspected.

By this time, too, Mistress Alice had become suspicious that all was not well with us. The aspect of the crew toward her was most forbidding, nay insolent, even when I was by, so that instinctively the girl drew closer to me, her old admirer, for protection. In every way I made it my business to make light of her fears, and in this way we almost insensibly drifted into our former friendly relations; at least she no longer held aloof. So one moonless night when we were practically alone on deck, first swearing her to secrecy, I divulged the whole story concerning the why and wherefore of our present adventure.

"Your news does not surprise me

very much," she said, "and the crew will never suspect that I am in the secret. Yet I do wish you—yes, and them likewise—all success, for I know how much it means to all concerned. You must know I would rather help than hinder you!"

Had I been free from anxiety on her account I could have prodigiously welcomed this new attitude on her part,—for by this time I was madly in love,—yet my tongue perforce was tied until I could deliver her scathless out of our present trouble.

THE mutterings and secret counselings among the crew grew apace, and a witless man could have seen that mischief was afoot. Yet was it my cue to appear unconcerned and unconscious. We were well into the Caribbean when the blow fell like levin from the blue.

I had been below to snatch a few hours' sleep, of which I stood greatly in need. At eight bells—four o'clock—in the afternoon I suddenly roused and went on deck. The *Silversea* lay hove-to, her topsail at the mast, pitching lazily on a sluggish, greasy swell. A light air was fanning out of the west. Under the foot of the foresail as I came on deck I made out a long, low-lying island, its white sands and vivid tropic greenery gleaming most invitingly in the fast westering sun. All hands were in the waist heaving the longboat out of its chocks, and Skene Pendragon, with many characteristic cursings, was overseeing the job.

"What's doing? Who gave orders to heave-to?" I bellowed from the break of the poop.

There was no answer save sulky silence, while the crew continued to sweat and heave at the falls until they had swung the heavy boat overside. Tom Twiddy, the *Vixen's* bo'sun, stood leaning against the weather bulwarks eyeing the proceedings with a sour grin on his weather-beaten chops, his jaws chewing spasmodically, totally out of it so far as the men of the *Silversea* were concerned. Even Skene Pendragon humped his back and ignored my query. In two leaps I was shouldering



among them, my face aflame at the gross breach of discipline.

"Ten thousand devils!" I growled, "Who's captain here?"

Pendragon straightened up and slowly faced me, his face purple with suppressed rage and passion, a hand on the dirk at his belt.

"Hell's bells!" he hissed, using his favorite imprecation. "You're not! We've deposed ye!"

Now that the fell stroke had come, it found me cold as ice.

"So! And what's afoot?"

"When we're ready you'll find out!"

Thus Skene Pendragon truculently, hands on hips. "Thunder and guns, Blake Davenant, you better not provoke us too far! You're a traitor!" A chorus of ominous growlings from twenty hairy chests evidenced that the revolt included most of the ship's company.

A sudden sickening fear swept my soul. I turned and made for the cabin to see if the women were safe. I found Alice Trelawney and Polly Quench huddled together on a transom, the wench hugging her knees and sobbing in fear that our throats were to be cut or worse. Evidently they had overheard the outfly on deck.

"Go to your cabin," I commanded, "and stir not until I come for you! Instantly!"—as I saw signs of hesitancy. "Your safety consists in obedience!" Not until I heard the stout bolt shot did I turn toward the main deck.

SUDDENLY I bethought me! I went to the locker where we kept the ship's papers and instruments and the chart of Cayman Cay. The map had been filched and it was not hard to name the thief. But I chuckled consumedly, since long ago, guarding against some such emergency as the present, I had made me a copy which even then was sewn into my belt. Besides, it mattered not a jot: I knew the ancient scrawl by heart. My dear old dad, in frequent fireside discussions, had given me details and sailing suggestions which Skene Pendragon knew naught about; and of what use could be the island's exact position, even were it known, to a crew without a naviga-

tor? As I stood blinking there in the cabin I recalled that on the missing paper I had jotted down in the presence of Skene Pendragon and Michael Doone my guess at the latitude and longitude of Cayman Cay; to wit, about twenty-two degrees north latitude and eighty-two west longitude, which would be right on the edge of the Great Campeachy Bank. As I came to learn later, I was not so far out in my blind reckoning. I had made an error of two degrees in longitude and four degrees of latitude—not so surprising when it is realized that picking up an islet a couple of miles long in that wilderness of cays and shoals and sandbanks was like looking for a needle in a pottle of hay.

Doubtless the bullies, with Pendragon and Doone in command, intended to cruise by dead reckoning in the lazy and incompetent buccaneer fashion to which some of them were accustomed, taking departure from that day's entry in the log.

But there, by heaven, I had them in the hollow of my hand! My double reckonings now stood me in good stead, for the treacherous scullions believed the *Silversea* at that blessed minute to be three hundred knots astern of her true position! Consequently they would carry sail for that distance before looking for Cayman Cay to heave in sight.

In my glee I smote my thigh with open palm so that the sound thereof was like the crack of a whip.

Hurriedly arming myself with two pistols and a hanger, I pushed out on deck, where I found that events had progressed at a rapid pace. They had swayed the heavy long-boat overside by means of yard-arm tackles, and two men were now in her receiving sundry kegs and boxes. I stepped to the bulwark and looked over. One of the men was Michael Doone; the other was Tom Twiddy, who kept up a fire of fo'c'sle abuse directed at *Silversea* and her crew.

"Mark me, ye double-dashed hell-hounds," he shouted, "I'll live to see ye hang at Execution Dock for a set of bloody mutineers an' murderers! Why don't ye hoist the Jolly Roger an' be done with it! Maroon us, would ye? Well, blast my skin an' hide if I



wouldn't rather that than be shipmates with such a scurvy lot o' dock-rats. Call yerselves gentleman rovers, do ye? A blistered lot o' skull an' crossbones pirates that'd—"

Twiddy's tirade was cut short by one of the hands dropping a bag of ship's biscuit on his head, which sent him rolling under the thwarts. He got up inarticulately shaking his fists.

But I had learned enough—indeed I think I had divined Skene's purpose ever since finding the ship's way arrested and an island under our lee. Nor was I left long in doubt. They had finished provisioning the boat, and Skene sang out:

"Now, Cap'n Davenant, get your lady passengers overside! And look ye, man,"—striding forward and hissing the words significantly in my ear,—  
"bear a hand if ye don't want worse to happen!"

THEIR fell purport I realized only too well; the rascally crew—some of them, at least—only awaited an excuse to add worse violence to their other crimes. My hand flew to the pistol in my belt. For one crazy moment my sight went red and I could have dropped Skene Pendragon right where he stood, though kinsmen's blood ran in our veins. But God mercifully stayed my hand as the thought flashed into mind that my arm was all that stood between sweet Alice Trelawney and a terrible fate. But I pushed my face defiantly into his black beard as was the choleric fashion of the day, hand on dirk.

"I'll pay you back for this trick if it takes the rest of my life, Skene Pendragon! You'll never find the cay if you cruise till the *Silversea's* keel rots off! Not for such as you is Harry Morgan's gold!"

"That's to be seen and as it may be," he sneered as he swung on his heel. "The quicker you an' your lady get out of this ship, the better all hands'll be pleased."

There was no mistaking that biting tone: Skene Pendragon was jealous. The thought came to me like a revelation, yet I chuckled at the picture of a fifty-year-old weather-beaten sea-dog being in love with a high-born maid of

twenty-three! Despite my reading, which told me that such things might be, I ridiculed the idea with the insolence of youth and the knowledge that I was first in the field. I had lost my ship, but I had not lost the lady—yet!

Also I sensed that by some hocus-pocus Skene was plotting to seize the bulk of the treasure for himself, even as Harry Morgan had done years ago. God help him and his crew of cut-throats if they ever came abreast of it!

Well, now that I knew the worst, there was little profit in delay. The women must be protected at all hazards, sink or swim! I rapped on Mistress Trelawney's cabin door, and in a few quiet words acquainted her with the plot and the men's intentions. It was then I thanked God that her maid was in tow. Her face went white with the horror of our immediate prospect, for such it must have seemed to a gently-nurtured girl.

"If you tell me it's inevitable, Blake,"—the old name slipped out unawares in her stormy stress of mind,—  
"I shall try to be brave and not add to your troubles."

"That's like your father's daughter and my old plucky playmate," I smiled, though I longed to take her in my arms and comfort her. But the present was no time for philandering.

GOING to my own berth, I made a quick parcel of some spare clothes, a couple of blankets, my sextant, writing materials, a packet of ammunition, and another of tobacco; then, looking around, I spied the starling in his cage—my mother's pet.

"You're too decent a bird to consort with mutineers," I said. "We'll e'en take you along! Here, Polly, catch hold—I'll look after your mistress." Having originally come aboard with no fallals or duds other than what was on their backs, there was no luggage for the girls to pack, so out we trooped on the main deck and made for the gap in the bulwarks where the men had shown decency enough to rig a side-ladder.

There were four of the crew in the longboat with oars apeak; a fifth was at the tiller; Tom Twiddy sat stolidly in the bow, his jaws champing silently,

gazing at the strip of pallid sand now slowly crimsoning beneath the tropic sunset. I handed the women down the ladder and into the stern-sheets, tossed in my dunnage, and followed suit.

"Push off! Give way!" shouted Skene over our heads, and under the impulse of the four sweeps we made rapidly for the islet which lay less than half a mile distant.

Only a feathery tinkle of surf was creaming over the beach; so they ran the boat bow on, and we four climbed out dry-shod, Tom Twiddy first, myself last. Then the rascals passed the scanty stores from hand to hand, piling them a few yards up the beach beyond high-water mark. There was pitiful little: a brace of water-breakers, three bags of ship bread, a tierce of beef, a ham, a bunch of candles, a lantern, a couple of bottles of French brandy, a canister of tea, another of sugar, a few tin and pewter pots and dishes, a spare sail and some cordage for a tent,—since the night dew falls heavily in the Caribbean,—and that was all to keep four souls alive indefinitely in case the island should prove barren or uninhabited.

The whole unloading took less than ten minutes; then the men of the *Silversea*, doggedly and in shamefaced silence, pushed off the beach, climbed aboard the longboat, and pulled hastily for the ship. We watched them avidly yet speechlessly and with full hearts, saw the boat's painter carried astern to tow,—Skene was in such haste to be off that he would not stop to hoist the heavy craft on deck,—saw them make sail and come about on a course heading for the Straits of Yucatan.

"The fools! The pitiful fools!" I laughed. "Unless they keep a bright lookout, they'll plump into Yucatan itself!"

Skene Pendragon, trusting to my last penciling on the chart, and believing his position at noon to be in 82 degrees longitude and latitude 17 degrees, was bound for my estimated locality as set down on the old map, and intended rounding the peninsula of Yucatan so as to make the Campeachy Bank. Well, the laugh was all on my side, since, thanks to my double reckoning, he was

at that moment really a hundred leagues nearer the straits than he figured, and stood to fall into all manner of troubles.

Mistress Alice, at sound of my voice, put her hand on my arm and snuggled—I vow and protest that's the right word—against my shoulder.

"Cheer up, dear heart!" I whispered. "Trust me to get you out of this traverse. It's hard lines, I know, but it might be worse!"

I felt her shudder as she drew even closer.

"I'd rather be here than there," she murmured, waving her hand toward the fast-receding *Silversea*.

"Why, then, that's as it should be. Never say die, you know! We'll be sailing away in a few days, happy as quahogs at high water! Ho, there! Twiddy man, bear a hand to set up something like a tent for Mistress Trelawney and Polly Quench!"

I had quite forgotten the starling since setting his cage on top of our stores on first stepping ashore. But now, cheered by the sound of our voices as I doubt not, that blessed bird set up such a shrilling of the rollicking old "Lilliburlero,"—the only tune he knew,—as set us all to laughing and our pulses to leaping. For a quartet that had just been cruelly marooned on what might prove to be a desert island we were remarkably cheerful, not to say merry.

THE first imperative thing to be done, now that our marooning was accomplished, was to raise some sort of shelter for Mistress Trelawney and her maid against the coming night. So Twiddy and I ran to the bush, which nigh-a-most lapped the water's edge, and with our cutlasses hacked down three stout manzanita saplings, two of them forked. These we trimmed into shape with our knives, and by planting the forked ones in the sand, with the third crossed thereon, we had the requisite framework. Across this we stretched the spare sail which the mutineers had compassionately left us, weighing the flaps with lumps of coral, and barricading the open ends with kegs and boxes. The result was an

A-shaped tent four feet high; my blankets and spare coats spread on the soft sand made a passable couch.

Working like mulattoes, for the day was nearly spent and the short tropic twilight fast coming down, Twiddy and I hastily gathered a double armful of cocoanut husks and shells, and with flint and steel soon kindled a fire. Then we boiled tea and grilled some slices of ham, which, with sea-biscuit, made our first meal on the islet. A little later Mistress Trelawney bade us good-night—for which I was thankful, since I wished to be alone with Tom Twiddy, an experienced old sea-dog, and take counsel for the morrow.

On the beach we flung ourselves and lighted our pipes, within earshot of the crude makeshift which sheltered all that was most dear to me this side of heaven—yea, not excepting the treasure of which I had come in search. The old man-of-war's man was the first to break silence.

"Whereabouts do ye reckon we be, Cap'n Davenant?" says he, quite respectfully, yet as one having a legitimate interest in the answer.

"Well, Tom, I'll be frank with you,"—hitching myself a little closer. "The *Silversea*, as you may have noticed, was a witch for sailing. Fifteen knots in a steady breeze was her speed. Those devils yonder were ignorant as Paddy's pig; partly to keep them in the dark, perhaps because I feared treachery, partly because I doubted if they would credit such sailing, I kept two reckonings going—one in my head, which was the true one, and another for the cabin sailing-chart. Consequently at this moment they don't know where they are."

"Sarve 'em bloody well right."

"At noon to-day," I went on, "we were in latitude 18 degrees and 40 minutes north, longitude 87 degrees and 30 minutes west. *They* believed—and the pricked chart at the cabin table told a similar tale—that they were really in latitude 17 degrees and longitude 82 degrees, about three hundred knots to the east'ard."

"Bully for you, Master," growled Twiddy. "But seein' as we're in a man-

ner o' speakin' shipmates in this 'ere maroonin' job, I'd take it kindly, Cap'n Davenant, if you'd give me the rights an' facts o' this 'ere cruise o' the *Silversea*."

"That's only fair," was my answer, "and I was about to do so anyway! To cut short a long story, we were after treasure,—Sir Harry Morgan's treasure,—you'll have heard of him, no doubt—supposed to be buried on a cay in the Caribbean." Then I gave him the yarn in as few words as would make the thing sound probable and intelligible to one who had not lived day and night with the story as long as I had.

"AN' that there bleedin' Snapdragon an' his pals—not all o' 'em, mind ye'—want t' hog the whole thing!" said Twiddy, going to the heart of the matter at once. "'Course, he was sweet on the lady, seein' as both on yer had known her ashore; but sooner or later, whether or no you'd picked us up, he'd have made shift t' get rid of you some-way; even if it kem to a knife in the back an' a toss over the side 'of a dark night. Oh, I smelled 'em out, though they was mighty close-mouthed about it!"

"So! Well, Tom, that only shows that sometimes the onlooker sees most of the game. Here we are—you and I and Mistress Trelawney. I don't mind telling you that we were playmates back there in England; hence no scath shall come to her so long as I'm above ground. What's to be done?"

"Fust thing, seein' as we've got to live, is to take a look round in the mornin'. I've a notion this 'ere ileyand isn't all sand an' cocoanuts."

"Right you are. I hope not. What next?"

"Whereaway do ye figure this treasure ileyand o' yours might be?"

I gave him the problematic location, —88 degrees west longitude and 22 degrees north latitude,—but the terms meant nothing to his mind untutored to navigation.

"'Pears t' me," he enunciated gravely, "the ileyand can't be very far away. If them there scaramouches'd only left

us the boat, we might 'ave pushed ahead ourselves an' beat 'em to it!"

This view, while undoubtedly true, did not impress me greatly, for I was obsessed with the idea that Cayman Cay lay to the westward of Yucatan, while we, I knew, were marooned on the eastern coast of that hump of land.

"Were it showing above the horizon in to-morrow's daylight, we couldn't reach it," I commented dryly. "But we'll do some leg-work in the morning." And with that, worn out by the day's excitement, I knocked the ashes out of my pipe and curled up in the still warm sand for some much-needed sleep.

PINK streamers of dawn were shooting athwart the eastern sky when we awoke and stretched our limbs, cramped from sleeping out and cold. But some vigorous arm-flapping soon set our sluggish blood to coursing freely, and then up leaped the glorious sun, heralding a gorgeous tropic morning in what has been aptly named the American Mediterranean.

First assuring ourselves that all was quiet within the women's tent, we set off, plowing through the sand up the beach to where the verdure began, a matter of perhaps twenty rods. Then we plunged into the bush, which was composed of tall, coarse grass, clumps of palm-trees, flowering plants and bushes, all strange to our eyes. Yet nowhere was the growth so lush as to prevent easy walking. The only animal life consisted of birds and monkeys—the former mostly gaily-feathered parquets, the latter troops of little brown bright-eyed creatures that chattered volubly as we disturbed them and followed us by leaping from branch to branch. Signs of human occupancy there were none; indeed, it soon became obvious that the island was not only tenantless but barren of productions fit for food save cocoanuts.

In about ten minutes of this sort of going we suddenly burst out of the bush on the other side, proving that the islet was not more than half a mile wide.

Here we came to a beach of gleaming

sand and coral the mate of that whereon we had camped the night before. By the sun I could tell that the land trended with a curve north and south, and measured not more than two miles in its longer dimensions. The verdure was confined to the center strip, an elevated ridge that tapered to sea-level at the ends. There were no traces of fresh water so far and when I recalled that we had food for not more than a couple of weeks and that the water in the breakers would be gone in two days, I realized that the outlook was pretty blue for our ever seeing Old England again, since ships of any sort were unlikely to touch save by chance.

WELL, we turned our steps to the right hand, that is, to the north, intending to come at the tent by making a compass around the northern extremity, following the beach for greater ease in walking. We had not gone far when we made a discovery, coming to a tiny cove running into the land. This was too wide to jump and too deep to ford, so we made a detour inland again, noting that the banks came rapidly together. Soon the cove narrowed into a creek issuing out of the bushes, and fed by a sparkling brook of limpid clearness.

Twiddy was instantly on his knees and filling his hat; he tasted and then drained greedily, for your true salt-water sailor drinks whenever he gets the chance.

"By the Virgin, master," he shouted breathlessly, "it's fresh!"

"Thank God for that!" And I followed Tom's example, satisfying myself that the water was indeed drinkable. "That lets us out—no danger in dying of thirst, anyway. But what's that yonder?"

"That," to which I pointed, was an irregular, almost shapeless hump, half-buried in the sand and coral of the cove's bank. We raced toward it, plunging ankle-deep in the loose soil, and soon fetched up alongside. An instant's glance told me the truth.

"The wreck of some old galleon!" I exclaimed. "See, you can make out her shape—and look there, Tom—all her after-part is burned away!"

"Looks like she caught afire an' them that sailed her scuttled an' beached her. How old would she be, master?"

"Oh, at least a hundred years; and probably a Spaniard; they haven't built ships of that pattern since my going to sea. And here's another thing, Tom: Mark me, if once we could clear off the sand and come at the 'tween decks, it's on the cards we'll find hold or lazareet packed solid with silver ingots! Maybe Skene Pendragon didn't play us such a scurvy trick, after all—eh? We'll look into this later. Let's push on, else Mistress Trelawney will be wondering where we are."

"You may be right," grumbled the old sea-dog, "but jest at this blessed minute I'd rather have a slice o' that ham an' a pannikin of tea than all the silver you're likely t' get out o' that buried hulk!"

THERE was no answer to this but a laugh, for I was beginning to feel mightily sharp-set myself. So on we trudged until we reached the northern limit of the beach. Here we found that the land forked into two long spits of gleaming sand, making room for quite a little tidal estuary. So we cut across through the rapidly thinning bush again, climbing upward, until we came out on something of a clearing, three or four acres in extent, elevated perhaps fifty feet above sea-level, from which we could overlook all this northern end of our little domain.

Here another surprise awaited us: In the middle of the cleared space stood the remains of a square block-house built of logs; the upright timbers were standing for the most part, but the roof was fallen in. We walked around this unexpected relic of man's handiwork until we came to a square opening in the stockade which must formerly have been the gate or entrance. Here in the middle trickled a little stream of water, which we discovered proceeded from a great puncheon sunk in the center of the block-house evidently right over a hidden spring. This, then, was the source of the creek which we had sampled farther down the beach.

"A regular buccaneer lair!" said I,

looking around. "See, from this elevation good lookout could be kept on three sides. That spring is probably the only one on the islet. Then see what a clever little haven lies between those two forking spits of sand!"

"Jest like the jaws of a fish," remarked Tom Twiddy. "Why, them pirates c'd run in here t' refit, fortify themselves up here on shore, an' have lots o' water for their rum!"

Suddenly I went cold all over, though the sun's rays even at that early hour were burning and stinging our backs. Nervously fumbling at my belt, I drew out the square of thick paper on which I had made my copy of the old map. For perhaps the hundredth time I read the century-old legend which had come down to the Davenants through that castaway in the Bahamas:

Five days' sail S. S. W. from Isle of Pines; long narrow cay trending N. and S. slightly wooded; at north end a fort or stockade overlooking narrow haven deep water between open jaws of alligator or fish; chests sunk in sand two rods from back wall; clump of cocoa palms due S.

WHEN next I spoke after looking up and around, noting the salient features of the islet, which tallied to a dot with the description in my hand, there was indescribable awe in my voice.

"Listen to this, Tom." And in hoarse tones I read aloud what is set down in the paragraph above. Tom stared open-mouthed, then growled, "That's a rum go, master."

I seized his arm and ran him around outside the stockade to the north wall. I paced off two rods south, as near as I could judge, then looked for the clump of palms. With dismay I noted that there was no particular group of those trees in sight—the whole margin of the little forest was overgrown. But then I reflected that in nigh upon a hundred years the plantation had probably vastly increased. Anyway, there were enough palms in sight to fit our case.

"Tom," I said solemnly, "unless I'm mightily mistaken, this very island is the one we were sailing in search of,—Cayman Cay itself,—and right here



under our feet Morgan's treasure was buried!"

"Wot you say goes, master," returned Tom Twiddy, tightening his belt.

"Jest t' think we've got the best o' them bloody rapsallions arter all their manoo'rin' t' get the weather gage of us!"

"It's wonderful, almost miraculous!" I breathed.

"Well," says the old sea-dog, "if so be as them chests is here, they aint goin' t' move themselves 'fore we can git back. I'm nigh famished fer a bite o' breakfuss." So saying, he moved off at a dog-trot down the slope in the direction of camp. With many a backward glance I followed, for I knew the women by this time would be getting mighty anxious.

AT noon that day, I may say here, I ascertained our exact position, which I found to be eighty-seven degrees thirty-eight minutes west longitude and eighteen degrees forty-two minutes north latitude; this allowed for the two or three hours' sailing done by *Silversea* between my previous day's observation and the time when Skene Pendragon hove-to.

Naturally, if Cayman Cay was really under our feet, I had been all wrong in my hypothetical reasoning for position. But now I could see how we had been led astray. Morgan's name was so bound up with Campeachy Bay on the other side of Yucatan that we had insensibly been biased; yet the error was not surprising, and after all we had stumbled blindly on the cay like threading a needle's eye in the dark. What a judgment on the mutineers, I reflected.

You may imagine we lost no time in telling—or rather shouting—our momentous news. Mistress Alice and Polly were busied over breakfast when we arrived in camp—the former looking fresh and lovely as though she had just stepped out of her boudoir at Helston Hall. With a good church-woman's piety, she remarked that we ought to be devoutly thankful for God's mercy for leading us aright and delivering us out of the hands of our

enemies. She was not overimpressed with the rest of our story.

Of a surety I was anxious to come at Morgan's treasure—the later event had put the burned galleon out of my head; so the four of us trooped up the hill to the site of the battered stockade. Here I led Mistress Alice to the exact spot. The ground showed no signs of recent disturbance, which somewhat illogically I was for interpreting as a good omen, forgetful that the tropic storms of a single rainy season would obliterate such traces as effectually as the buffeting of a century.

However, having no tools or spades, Tom and I fell to work scooping out the dirt with a brace of giant clamshells apiece. Two, three, four feet down we went, making the light sandy soil fly, digging an oblong trench perhaps a couple of feet wide, sweating prodigiously, without encountering anything. Then suddenly Twiddy gave a grunt, muttered an oath, and rose holding something white in his uplifted left hand.

Mistress Alice and her Polly vented their feelings in shrill shrieks at the sight—a bleached, grinning skull! Then I recalled the story of the murdered sailors, ruthlessly shot down by Morgan and entombed with the chests, and was mightily heartened by the sight, gruesome though it was, which argued that the spot had probably never been disturbed by mortal hands.

"Better go around the other side where it is shady," said I to the women; "there may be more of these relics." And my prophecy proved true. Rapidly we unearthed a lot more bones, a half-rotten leathern belt with a rusted scabbard attached, and a seaman's hanger. Then suddenly my clam-shell slid along something smooth and hard, which, on the dirt being scooped away, proved to be the wide copper cleat clamping a hinged chest.

"Hurray!" I shouted. "Here's what we're after! Bear a hand, Tom, and clear away the dirt!"

YET it took us a good hour of toiling and moiling with our wretched tools before we could liberate the chest and pry it out of its bed. Then



we found there was still another underneath that one—hence it was well along in the afternoon before both receptacles were clear of the trench. We had no means of breaking them open; the wood, bound with wide bands of riveted copper, was hard as iron; nothing short of ax or crowbar would have done the business.

But a happy thought came to me. Drawing my pistol, I placed the muzzle against the lock and pulled trigger. The recoil was like to have broken my wrist, but, the heavy lock flew to flinders. A second shot was equally effective with the other chest, leaving the contents at our mercy—all we had to do was to lift the lids—and then, I was seized with a fit of shivering. Suppose the chests should contain nothing of value, after all? So I took a turn about the little plateau, combed the sweat out of my eyes and hair, then came back resolved to know the best—or the worst.

Well, it wasn't the latter. On prying back the lids with our dirks the sudden splendor that smote our eyes was like to have blinded us with its radiance. Mistress Alice and Polly Quench leaned tiptoe over my shoulder with delighted little squeals and exclamations.

Each chest was divided into three compartments or pockets about six inches deep and square, for the wood was very thick. In one chest the center pocket was filled with cut and uncut stones—red rubies, green emeralds and ice-white diamonds; the end compartments held each a double handful of jewelry—rings, diadems, necklets, stomachers, cumbrous turnip-watches studded with brilliants, and even jeweled sword-hilts broken off short for their settings. In the second chest each of the three divisions was packed solidly with gold in little flat ingots—the pale yellow gold of Peru!

Gloatingly we feasted our eyes on the almost fabulous wealth which had once been won at the cost of so much blood and rapine. Boyishly I seized a ruby pendant, clasp it around the neck of Mistress Alice, and slipped a diamond ring on the fat red finger of Polly Quench. Then I let a stream of

flashing stones run through my fingers, the while Tom Twiddy was on his knees before the case of ingots.

"Strike me!" he asseverated. "I never knewed there was so much gold in the world,"—totally oblivious to the less tangible but more potential wealth contained in the chest of jewels.

Almost reverently we replaced the lids; then, foolishly afraid to leave the loot unguarded on the hilltop, though no possible harm could have befallen, we cut a couple of stout palm saplings, trussing the cases thereon, and carried them triumphantly to camp, sedan-chair fashion. Not until that task was accomplished did we feel safe. But then appeared the fly in our amber of satisfaction.

"Wot's the use of the bloomin' gold, anyhow," growled Twiddy, his face aflame and beaded with sweat. "We can't spent ut an' we can't get ut away! Blarst the cussed luck, says I!"

It was even so, I reflected gloomily. Without a ship to carry us home, and with no apparent hope that a craft of any sort would heave in sight, we were like Tartarus of old, chained to his rock, abundance just beyond reach of his tortured senses!

AND now comes the surprising end of this amazing, adventurous sea-scape.

Ten days dragged their slow length along, every sun's rising bringing us castaways nearer to starvation, since Cayman Cay grew not a single edible thing save cocoanuts. To recall another of my boyhood's classical readings, we were somewhat in the position of King Midas in the fable. At first we kept busy; we moved the tent back into the grateful shade of the tiny forest; we explored every foot of the cay; we tried vainly to catch fish; we snared paroquets and monkeys for the pot, but found them uneatable; Tom and I climbed all over the half-buried galleon, but in default of axes or crowbars found it impossible to break her open; we kept incessant watch for any chance sail from the eminence of the stockade, but in vain; dimly and far to the west could be made out a faint purple line which I

judged to be the Spanish Main; we discussed the feasibility of making a raft, but as we had neither tools nor cordage it mattered not a jot that what little timber there was turned out to be useless; the rainy season was about due, and without shelter the women would surely perish. So, as I say, starvation and blue ruin stared us in the face, while riches untold were ours. In those bitter days I almost came to hate the sight of Harry Morgan's copper-clamped chests and to fancy that a curse must follow them.

Mistress Alice bore up amazingly, shaming the whimpering Polly Quench into fortitude and protesting stoutly that we should be saved—she knew it! Why? Oh, because God would not permit us to perish! Such simple faith and trust almost made me believe in spite of the cruel hard facts by which we were surrounded; that she offered up her prayers every night for our deliverance I likewise knew.

On the eleventh morning I awoke at sunrise after a feverish night. Twiddy and I now slept in the bush hard by the tent. Rising to my feet, I parted the shrubs for a glimpse of the mocking, smiling sea. The sight that met my gaze made me knuckle my eyes to rub the sleep out of them. For there, riding to anchor six cables' length off shore, was a noble ship—the *Silversea*, for I recognized the beauty at a glance—looking as trim and taut as the day she came out of Falmouth roads. A red-capped head was showing over her rail. Midway between ship and shore was one of the small boats, with a solitary figure standing in her stern, sculling back to the ship; on the beach in the foreground stood a knot of sailors looking curiously around.

Such a sight would have put life into a dead man. I burst through the bushes and into the open, raising a mighty "Halloo!" through my hollowed hands, and waving my hat the instant I saw that I was seen. Then I ran back to the tent screaming hoarsely:

"Wake up! Wake up! The *Silversea* has returned!" And with Twiddy at my heels, I raced down the slope of sand and coral.

THE men—there were five of them on shore—broke into a run and we came pantingly together. They were all Mount's Bay fellows—Bennie Storms, Jack Lovering, Will Brace, Micah Wilts and Peter Pigott. One and all they fell on their knees as we came together, raising their clenched hands appealingly.

"Forgive us, wont 'e, Cap'n Blake!" was the burden of their united plea. "The trouble kem all along of Skene Pendragon an' Michael Doone plotting with that scum they scraped out o' the Falmouth slums. We was driv into it, but only after Skene 'd passed his Bible oath that no harm 'd come t' you an' the ledly. . . . That's Gord's truth, so help me!"—and the like.

Well, that was about as I'd already figured things happening, and I was too glad to see my old ship with the really loyal part of my crew to greet them with a rough tongue, richly as they deserved a dressing-down.

"What's become of Pendragon?" I wanted to know.

"Skene's dead; Doone's dead, wi' all their gang; there's only seven left alive."

"Bloodshed, eh?"

"There was a wicked, cruel fight," explained Micah Wilts. "After you was out of the ship, them Falmouth beauties got at the rum. The very next night we kem near running ashore; the scallions wouldn't obey orders, so Skene shot Robinson, the ringleader. That brought on a bloody scrimmage which drug in all hands. Pendragon went down wi' a knife-thrust in his back; Michael Doone got a bullet in the neck; then us fellows bunched ourselves an' druv the whole b'lin' overboard till we cleared the ship. Oh, 'twas a sweet mellay while it lasted!"

"So I should say," I commented drily; "and they left their marks on some of you,"—since while Clarke had been talking I noticed that Storms, Brace and Pigott were wounded and still carried blood-stained bandages on arms and heads. The other two had been more or less manhandled. "And what happened next?"

"Well, sir, we held a parlay an' decided that the properest course was t'

try an' find this 'ere ileyand, so we bouts ship an' we've been muckin' abart ever since till we sights the place at day-break this blessed morn."

"And you're none too soon," I assured them gravely. "We're practically out of stores and another week would have finished us." Their faces fell guiltily at this.

Tom Twiddy had listened with wooden face to this active interchange of query and answer. He now nudged my arm and drew me aside.

"Don't 'e tell 'em about the treasure, master," he counseled hoarsely in my ear, "—leastaways not until we're afloat again."

"Never fear," I assured him. "I know these lads—they come from my own part of England—they'll run straight as greyhounds from this time on. Besides, you old dotard, how could we tranship the chests unbeknown to all hands?"

"Well," the old croaker grumbled as he turned away, "if we're all knocked on the head some dark night don't say as I didn't warn ye!"

**B**UT my resolve was already taken, and I swung on my heel intending to disclose our luck, when I found that Mistress Trelawney and Polly had joined the sailors' group, while Jack Lovering was enacting the story of the shipboard fracas all over again for her especial benefit. Her first words made me smile covertly as she flashed a dazzling smile around the half circle of rough seamen, all of whom knew her rank and origin:

"I am sure you men behaved very bravely and properly," she was saying, "and when we arrive at Kingston, Papa will thank and reward you one and all."

So we were going to Kingston, were we? Truly, said I inwardly, man proposes and woman disposes! I had not thought of doing so—but perhaps we might do worse. However, I had my own disclosures to make, which I did as dramatically as possible.

"Men," I said, "do you know where you are standing at this minute?"

They shuffled their feet in the sand, looking around sheepishly.

"Well, let me tell you this is the very island we set out to find! You are now on Cayman Cay—and Harry Morgan's treasure was no myth, for Tom Twiddy and I found it, dug it up with our own four hands, and it lies yonder under the trees, two cases of it, gold and jewels enough to make everyone rich."

"Don't forget the galleon, master," whispered Twiddy. "It 'ud be a crool shame t' sail without findin' out what's in *her* guts."

So I had to branch out again, telling them of the wrecked and half-sunken hull. By the time I had ended they were almost too dazed to speak. Perhaps their general sentiments were voiced by Bennie Storms, who shifted his quid, spat solemnly and said:

"I allus said it wuz the Davenants for the devil's own luck!" Then we shook hands all round in token of amity and renewed allegiance, and, the boat having returned, I sent three of them back to the *Silversea* for crow-bars, pickaxes, long-handled shovels and hammers, for I was minded to settle all doubts about the galleon without further delay, since I was crazy to be afloat and homeward bound. While they were gone we had breakfast—our final meal on Cayman Cay, as it proved, making a clean sweep of every last crumb.

And how those bullies did tackle that poor old galleon! In less than two hours they shoveled off the sand, ripped open her deck-planking and uncovered the lazaret. There, sure enough, we found two tons of bar silver, which we sent aboard *Silversea* by means of the longboat, which was rowed around to the westerly beach, for I wouldn't trust the ship herself in those narrow shoal-infested waters. By sunset all hands were aboard, the jewels, gold and silver safely stowed, anchor weighed, and by the light of a full tropic moon we crowded the barkentine with all sail, setting a course N. E. by N., our long jibboom pointing fair for Kingston harbor.

**A** VERY few words will suffice to spin the rest of this deep-sea yarn. Arrived in Jamaica, Sir Norrie Tre-

lawney welcomed his only child as one risen from the dead,—the *Vixen* had been reported lost at sea with all hands,—and Mistress Alice persisted in making me out quite a paladin in recounting her rescue and ultimate preservation. To Sir Norrie privately I gave the story of our little expedition and its successful termination. To his interest we were indebted that no awkward official inquiries were made—wherein the *pater's* canny forethought in providing *Silversea* with shipshape papers and manifest was happily justified.

After taking on provisions and fresh water we set sail for home, leaving Mistress Alice and Sir Norrie to follow in a West Indiaman as befitted his rank, and where we arrived after and uneventful passage on the twentieth of October, having been absent upward of five months. I found my dear parents well and my father especially delighted at our success, though he was bitter angry at the news of Pen-dragon's treachery. In less than twenty-four hours we had "run" our cargo, depositing the chests in the cave

under Crag Farm's kitchen, there to await negotiations with certain London bankers. It needs scarcely be said that the Davenants thereafter bade fair to be numbered among the richest in our part of England.

"And is that all?" queries the gentler sex among my readers. Well, not quite. As soon as I had restored Mistress Alice to her father, and ere we left Kingston, I asked the dear girl a momentous question. What her answer was you may guess from the fact that she now bears my name. Helston Hall is our united home, while three sturdy lads named Blake and Drake and Norrie waken the echoes with their shouts and merry laughter. And at the lodge guarding our gates dwell Thomas Twiddy and Polly his wife, from which you may see that wealth and happiness for at least two couples proceeded from Harry Morgan's hoard on Cayman Cay.

And the starling—he's a rare old bird by now—still whistles that fine old tune of "Lilliburlero" whenever he catches the merry echoes of our children's laughing voices.

*Skene Pendragon 50* *Differenced in age*  
*Blake Davenant 42* *"half a score years"*  
 An  
**Arizona Knight**

*THE story of a misadventure  
 which was turned into a romance.*

By Wilbur Hall

**T**HE very train that bore Mary Anderson toward the mysteries of the desert and her first country-school position spoke to her of romance. And when the harsh voice of the brakeman bawled in her ear, "Imperial Junction—change for El Centro an' all Valley points!" she got her things together hurriedly and eagerly made ready to leave the train.

The school-teacher found Imperial Junction as interesting as a still-life drawing of a jug and a wooden cube. The main-line tracks run northwest and southeast; the branch runs south. There is a depot, painted Southern Pacific yellow, a water-tank, a half-dozen shacks for section hands, and a number of hoboes, always either asleep in the shade or begging from travelers. Whether they are the same hoboes, or

whether the railroad company puts on an entire change of cast every week, is not certain. But they are always there.

PRESENTLY another engine-whistle screamed, and the westbound overland came roaring up. Then a little snuffy engine appeared from nowhere and began to snort and clatter about, making up the Valley local. The first thing it did was to pick up from the rear end of the westbound a very large, very shiny, very brassily decorated private car, which it began to drag away, backwards, like a small ant with a large crumb of bread. As the private car was shoved toward the depot again on the branch-line track and coupled on the rear of the local train, Mary Emma Anderson, on the *qui vive* for romance and adventure, gazed at it spellbound, and at the group of men and the two women idling comfortably on the rear platform under an awning.

"*Miraflores*,"—Mary Emma read the name of the private car half aloud. "That's French for—for— Now, I wonder what it does mean?"

She climbed into the shabby old car to which a blunt brakeman directed her just in time to get a seat before the train started. She asked the conductor, when he came around for her ticket, about the private car. "Vice president and a party on inspection," the fat man in blue grunted. "Where do you get off?"

"I want to go to Holtville."

"Change at El Centro. Take the Interurban, five-ten. . . . Tickets, please."

Change again! Mary Emma was in a flutter. Another change—another opportunity to gaze at the private car and possibly to see some of the vice president's party—another potential meeting with romance and adventure! Mary Emma clutched the handle of her wicker suit-case and sniffed the new, hot odors of the Valley local.

And in the private car behind her, meantime, there rode Romance and Adventure together, in the seat with a pretty young girl in a neat gray traveling-suit, and a saucy gray hat, bright-

ened with a flaming red feather, who was unconscious of their presence and who had no interest in them, and who would have turned on them a cold shoulder if she had known they were present.

IT is strange that Fate so frequently trusts momentous affairs to the hands of careless people. In this instance she had let a large contract to one Billy Lynn; and Billy, while a good sort of a farm-hand, was, at this particular time, very well loaded down with the simple contract of taking care of himself. He was also loaded in another way, and was adding to the load with regularity and a generous hand.

In a small, dark lean-to at the rear of Jim Gildersleeve's blacksmith-shop, Billy sat on an empty box, his feet stuck straight out before him, his hat on the back of his head, and a beer-bottle tilted to his lips. On the floor under him were four "dead soldiers," and when he had killed the fifth he dropped it with the rest.

In one corner lay "Pigeon" Schmidt, another farm-hand, now wholly incapacitated—indeed, snoring. Billy addressed him.

"Pi-jon," he said slowly, "I'm not drinkin' man. Tha's lucky. If I was drinkin' man, s'pose Winzel'd let me come to town t' get school-marm? Not mush! Now, *you're* drunk, Pi-jon—dead drunk. 'Shamed yourself! You couldn't take care 'f school-marm. I can. I'm not drinkin' man."

Jim Gildersleeve stuck his head in at the door. "You better cut that stuff out, Billy," he advised. "Train gets in in about five minutes."

"Five minutes!" Billy Lynn exclaimed, thickly. "Tha's 'nough for 'nother bottle. Int'urban's allish late. School-marm's allish late. Lucky I'm not drinkin' man. Jim, give us 'nother bottle."

"No more—not here. If you'll take it out to the ranch I'll let you have a couple."

Billy wanted now to argue the matter of the additional beer, but compromised finally, stuck the bottle under his coat, and went out. As he did so, he heard the train cross the trestle and



whistle for the station. "School-marm have to wait," Billy decided. "I'm goin' have little walk. Cool off—tha's bes' plan. Can't take chances with new school-marm."

MEANTIME Mary Emma Anderson, heroine of this tale, had successfully made her change of cars at El Centro, had feasted her soul on the possibilities of the desert for romance, had been jerked eastward bumpily to Holtville,—discovering that one of the passengers of the private car *Miraflores* (a girl in a neat gray traveling-suit with a saucy red feather flaming from her chic little toque) was also Holtville-bound,—and had alighted in the East-side town, still avidly seeking romance and adventure. Her attempts at conversation with the lady of the private-car party had been discouraged. Mary Emma had given up and gone out into the street to look about for what might chance. The place was interesting and promising, but the men looked a bit commonplace. They stared at her because she was a stranger, but none of them "thrilled her heart with meaning glances."

A block from the depot a man in corduroys passed her, stuffing a big bottle into his coat pocket, but he did not see her. He hurried toward the depot. Thus close did Mary Emma come to Billy Lynn and Romance—but no closer. For when she returned to the station, the girl in the gray suit and with the red-feathered hat was gone. And after waiting half an hour for the man who was to have met her, Mary Emma hired a vehicle and drove to Wenzell's place, where she had arranged to board. The Wenzell family greeted her with ejaculations and incoherencies. The buckboard and the mules which Billy Lynn had driven in to town to meet her had returned without their driver. Where was Billy Lynn? What had happened? How had she gotten there? Was Billy dead?

Mary Emma wished that she knew. Somehow she appeared to have come close to an adventure. But as Billy Lynn failed to appear, either then or later, the new teacher went to bed with her thirst for thrills unappeased and

with her fond dream of romance as yet unrealized.

TO return to Billy Lynn: The sharp evening air of the desert, which promised to become decidedly colder soon, had an excellent effect on Billy, and in a quarter of an hour he was sure enough that his legs would go in the same direction he went, to make his way to the depot. In the blank waiting-room sat a trim girl in gray traveling-suit, with a saucy gray hat brightened up by a flaming red feather, and with a very pretty face setting off the whole. Billy Lynn's condition improved. He took off his hat.

"I—I come in to get you," he began, looking everywhere but into the gray eyes under the gray turban. "Ready, ma'am?"

The girl hesitated for just a fraction of a second. She looked at Billy with some misgivings. "I supposed Mr.—"

"Couldn't come. Said to say he was—was sorry—irrigating—couldn't leave."

"Do you drive a car?" The girl had risen, and now she picked up her bag.

"Car?" Billy looked blank. "No—drive the mules."

The girl laughed. "Oh—mules! That is primitive. Yes, I'm ready."

An unmistakable odor of beer offended the nostrils of the dainty girl when the wind freshened as they turned into the country road along the canal, but Billy was so obviously master of his team of half-broken animals that she forgot her fears and looked about her with interest. The sun was setting over some purple-black mountains, and the western sky flamed with color. In the south rose a lone peak, shaped like a mushroom, and all about her were green fields, as fresh and bright as though newly washed by rain. The road followed the slow curve of the canal-bank, on which rushes and arrowweed grew thickly, and in the distance tall, straight trees reared themselves above a squat farmhouse. The air was like mountain-water, and there was a brooding silence made more impressive by the rattle of harness, the creak of the buckboard and the *thud-thud* of the mules' hoofs.



## Declaration

When in the course of household events it becomes necessary to dissolve the bonds of needless drudgery and care, the problem requires an immediate solution.

Campbell Kid



## And here's the solution—

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# Campbell's SOUPS

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Meanwhile, the silence and calm, and the easy motion of the buckboard, were having their effect on Billy Lynn. Billy remembered the bottle that was tucked under the seat; his mind began to dull; and he guided the team more mechanically. Once he nodded, and the girl looked at him suddenly—startled. When he began to talk—not to her—in disjointed phrases, she became alarmed, but thought it better to make no comment. So long as he kept the team in hand— But she looked anxiously ahead on the darkening road for signs of other travelers, or for a farmhouse.

BILLY LYNN turned to her finally. "Say, school-marm—mind holdin' mules for shake? I'm not drinkin' man, so tha's all right. But got to have li'l nourishment. Doctor says so. Great things, doctors. Couldn't get 'long 'thout doctors."

The girl kept a tight hold on herself. "If you don't drive me directly to the nearest house you'll be discharged to-night," she said shortly. "Don't you dare touch another drop of liquor!"

"'S all right—beer aint liquor; beer's nourishment. Only take half a li'l minute. Here, hol' lines, there's a good scout." Before she could prevent, he had dropped the reins in her lap and was leaning forward to reach under the seat. She clutched at the leathers desperately and jerked them up so sharply that the mules stopped, precipitating Billy Lynn to the bottom of the buckboard. From there—avoiding the wheels in some wholly miraculous way—he slid to the ground, and held up a bottle of beer.

The girl could only cling to the reins and wait. She did not know whether she could clamber safely to the ground or not, and if she did, she was aware the mules would run away, leaving her to face an infuriated drunken man. So she gasped: "Please hurry—I can't hold them, you know," and searched the road again for signs of help.

"Don' have to hol' 'em long," Billy Lynn said reassuringly. "Jes' half a li'l minute, ma'am. Now, if I was drinkin' man— Darn it, haven't got opener! Well, tha's shmall matter."

Proving it, he raised the bottle and cracked its neck across the steel-shod wheel. There was a report—a snort—a sudden turn, that almost sent Billy Lynn into the ditch—a lunge; and the mules were off. The girl dropped the reins and jumped.

The man hurled the bottle from him with an oath, started on a run, gave up the pursuit, and came back, sobered and apologetic. But when he approached the girl, who lay huddled in the road, she shot a look at him that stopped him. "You go and get me help this instant. No, no! Don't you touch me. Go, now!"

She tried to rise but gave it up, for her ankle was twisted under her, and she was badly shaken. Billy stood staring helplessly at her.

And at that instant Fate took him off the job and replaced him with Romance and Adventure, and brought a low gray motor-car purring out of the night, driven by another and much more responsible agent.

AT sight of the huddled bundle in the road and of the man standing near by, the newcomer shut off his power and rolled up noiselessly. "Hello there!" he called. "What's up?"

At the sound of the strong voice the girl in the dusty gray suit raised her head and found herself sobbing with relief. When the man stepped from the machine, she stopped suddenly, straightened her turban, and tried to brush off her coat. The man came to her at once. "What—are you hurt?" he exclaimed.

"Not badly," she said. "I don't know—"

He stooped over—a long stoop, too, for he was a tall young man—and lifted the girl up gently. She tried to stand, but uttered a little cry and clutched at the strong arm that held her. "It's my ankle," she said, flushing.

Without hesitation the young man unceremoniously stooped again, put his arms about her and lifted her lightly from the ground. "I'll carry you to the machine," he said superfluously.

He executed the matter very deftly, without hurting the bruised ankle, and then he took off his hat.

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Billy Lynn was at his elbow. "I—I let the mules get away, Foreman. It was my fault. The lady jumped out. I—I—" He stopped, awkwardly, and pulled at his sombrero.

"Why, it's Billy Lynn. Where were you going? How did it happen?"

The girl had closed her eyes and leaned back, half fainting. Billy Lynn prudently stepped out of reach of the long arms of the other man. "I went in to get her at the depot. New school-marm—teacher. Stopped at Gildersleeve's and had too much. Tha's all." The alcohol was getting in its work again.

"Why, you damned hound!" The young man took a quick step forward. "You ought to be licked!" he cried.

The girl spoke then. "Please let him go. It's—it can't be helped now. And if you don't mind driving on—I feel a little faint."

Billy Lynn faded quietly into the night. The other man lighted his lamps, cranked the machine and jumped in. "Excuse me," he said humbly. "I couldn't help it. That ruffian ought to be hanged." The car slid forward. "Where do you want to go?"

"I was going to Mrs. Kenmore's. Is it far?"

"Kenmore? Kenmore—don't believe I know the name."

"It doesn't matter, then. Anywhere where we can find a woman to take me in until I can let Beulah know. Is there a house near?"

The man suddenly threw the machine to one side and put on his brakes. "Something in the road—looked like a traveling-bag."

The girl laughed with a catch in her voice. "I believe it's mine. If you don't mind getting it?"

"Well, I should hope not." He backed the car skillfully, jumped out and handed her the identical tan Gladstone that had sat with her and Adventure and Romance in the private car *Miraflores*.

"You don't know how good it seems to find it!" the girl exclaimed, when the man was pushing on into the night again in the purring car. "It's—like finding a friend."

"I hope you've found two, then,"

the man ventured, and realized, when her shoulder stiffened and she drew away a bit, that he had made a mistake. So he drove in silence for a few minutes. At a cross-road he slowed down. "Did you say that name was Fennimore? Place where you're going, I mean."

"Kenmore."

"Oh. . . . There's some such name over at the edge of the East Side. It isn't far. If you want to go on there—that is, if the ankle isn't too bad."

She moved it cautiously. "It feels much better. Perhaps it would be a good plan to go—"

"We'll do it, then," he said promptly.

"If it isn't out of your way."

"Directly on my way," he lied.

SILENCE fell on them—the silence that alone is compatible with the intoxication of smooth movement over a hard road in the early, still hours of a desert night. The man at the wheel glanced frequently, without turning his head, at the little mussed turban—its feather the least bit bedraggled—and at the indistinct profile beneath it. There was just enough light to enable him to see that the eyes were closed and the head bent forward—and that it was a very adorable, very delightful profile. Then he turned a corner, rather sharply, and the body next his stirred, inclined, and then pressed shamelessly against his left arm. The turban was near his shoulder. He could feel the warmth of her cheek through his coat. He caught his breath, and shut off some of the power, so that the engine purred yet more gently.

She was asleep.

It is perfectly fair to say that, if the man had been entirely sure of his destination, he might have taken a round-about way to the East Side Canal, instead of going directly south and east and south again, as he did. But he only knew, vaguely, that some family of homesteaders had gone into the sandhills on the southeastern rim of the Valley, and that the name was Elmore, or Fennimore, or—it might have been Kenmore. He knew he could find the lady's friends if they existed. And, being quite unconscious of the hovering



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spirits of Romance and Adventure, and unaware of his own agency for them, he kept on into the night until he crossed the last bridge and faced the desert.

The road was getting very rough, and long stretches of sand appeared on it. Used as he was to desert driving, he was unable to keep the powerful car in its course without difficult maneuvering. The sharp movements of his left arm and the jolting of the machine at last, and much to his chagrin, awakened the girl, who sat bolt upright and gazed about her wildly in an effort to remember.

Then she laughed with embarrassment. "Why, I've been asleep!"

He turned to her. "Really? I don't believe you have."

"I know I have. The last thing I remember we were between some tall trees." She looked ahead, where the lights of the machine stretched, fan-wise, across unbroken levels of flat sand road winding in and out through a country destitute of any sign of human habitation. She studied the prospect with sinking heart—remembering Billy Lynn. Could it be possible that this man in the machine—

"Where are we?" she asked sharply.

"We're east of the Valley. I believe we'll get to the place you're looking for in a few minutes."

"But you don't mean anyone lives out here in this sand?"

The suspicion of him was lost on the man, twirling the steering-wheel desperately to keep the car in the trace of the road. "Several of them," he replied shortly. "All the Valley looked like this ten years ago."

The girl locked her hands in her lap tightly and tried to keep up heart. Certainly things didn't appear promising. Five minutes passed, and then the driver turned out of the road, the lights swung around and fell on two tents, stretched over wooden frames, with some sort of thatched shed in the rear and a litter of empty cans in front. The place was absolutely dark.

The man clambered out of the car and went to the house. He called and knocked on the door-frame, but the only sound in answer was the purring

of his engine. He struck a match and looked at a card tacked to the door. He read it aloud to his passenger:

"Charles Barmore, owner, 1415 East First Street, Los Angeles."

"Can you beat that?" he asked. He began to laugh, quietly. "I knew there was *more* to that name, all right. But it's not Kenmore."

HE climbed in again and began backing the car. Then he became suddenly aware of a change in the atmosphere. The girl sat stiffly, staring straight ahead of her—speechless and aloof. It occurred to him that she was disappointed. "Don't mind a little thing like this," he began. "We'll drive back to the nearest ranch and you can find your friends in the morning."

Still she was silent. The man shrugged his shoulders ever so slightly, but she was conscious of it. He decided that women took things altogether too seriously.

She was shivering with pure, craven, sickening, unreasoning fear.

The driver turned about, but in so doing sunk his rear wheels in a sand-hummock. He tried to pull out, failed, tried again, and stalled his engine. He cranked it with some difficulty, climbed in and spun the back wheels again. After several attempts he succeeded in moving forward out of the deepest sand, but the engine stopped. "What the deuce is the matter?" he grunted, alighting.

The girl was watching him with wide eyes, though he paid no attention to her. His mind was on the car. His heart began to sink, too, and he studied. It was dawning on him that he had made a considerable run on a very small amount of gasoline. Suppose—

He turned the engine over once more after an effort that left him panting. He drove forward a few rods, decided his fears were groundless—then stopped, dead.

No use cranking now. He knew what was wrong. He climbed to the ground, considered all the circumstances, and swore, under his breath. Then he approached the girl. "I'm awfully sorry," he hesitated; "I don't know how to tell you—"



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She turned on him wildly. "You drive me back to the railroad this instant, sir," she cried, her voice breaking tensely. "I thought you were a gentleman. I don't believe there is such a thing in this whole horrid country. . . . Do you hear me? You must start at once. . . . Oh, why did I come?"

"See here, gentle lady, I'm out of gasoline. I forgot all about it after I picked you up. I did, really. You don't suppose—" He stopped, and his face began to burn. "You don't think I'm fooling, do you?"

"I don't think anything about it. I've got to go back at once. Oh, please—don't play jokes on me. Don't you see I'm tired and—my ankle hurts. Please!" Then her voice broke.

In another minute he would have an hysterical girl added to his troubles. He reached into the machine for a wrench, opened the tap on the gasoline-tank behind the seat, and plunged a stick in. It came forth dry, and he held it toward her.

"Come, little woman," he said sternly, "you can see there's no gas. And you're only making things worse acting this way. Now, stop crying like a child and act as though you were grown."

Instantly she straightened and flung back her head. "Please go for help at once," she commanded. "I'll be quite all right now until you can get back."

The man hesitated. "It's about five miles to the nearest ranch," he said. "It will take me fully two hours, and it's rather late."

"Well?"

"I think you would be much more comfortable in the house. I can probably build you a fire."

HIS tone was convincing, but she hesitated. He was nothing but a ranch-foreman,—the drunken driver of the mules had called him that,—and the gasoline story sounded very peculiar. Yet it was chilly in the night air. She realized that with a little shiver, and drew her coat about her.

"Come," he said, and opened the door. She decided instantly that she would stay in the car, but before she

could say so, his arms were about her again and she was being lifted lightly. She jerked herself back, kicked one small foot against the dash, and cried out in pain. She had forgotten the ankle—and he had remembered. She ceased to struggle.

He put a strong knee against the door of the tent-house when they reached it, and stumbled in. A musty odor arose, and something scampered across the board floor. "Can you stand a minute till I get a light?" he asked.

She nodded, and he put her down gently, so that she could rest one hand against the door-frame. Then he struck a match. In its faint light they could see that the place was rudely furnished, but thick with dust, and with debris scattered everywhere. He crossed to a dirty shelf and in a moment found a stub of candle, which he lighted and placed on the table, sweeping off a pile of old magazines and empty cans to make room.

There was no chair, but several large wooden boxes had evidently been made to serve, and to one of these he helped her. At the rear stood a rusty, broken cookstove, one corner supported by an empty oil-can, the oven door gone, and the stove-pipe gaping and awry. He threw off the lids and squinted inside. "She'll do," he said. "I'm going to get some wood, and we'll have it warm as toast in no time."

The girl sat rigidly on the edge of her box and tried to think what she should do next. She must not cry—that was the first decision. She must not show she was afraid. After all—was she? He didn't look a bad sort. But neither had Billy Lynn. And Billy had been polite enough. . . . She shivered.

He came storming in, whistling, and caught sight of her trembling shoulders. "Pshaw, I didn't know it was so cold!" He flew at the stove. In another minute the fire was blazing, and the room began to lose some of its chill. The man seized the stump of a broom and vigorously clawed some of the worst of the dirt and litter out the front door. Occasionally he flung a cheerful assurance her way, but she responded only in monosyllables.



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WHEN he had straightened the camp up somewhat, he looked at his watch, and whispered. "Do you know what time it is?"

"No."

"It's almost eight o'clock. I've got some provisions in the machine that I was taking out to the ranch, and I'll get them. You can fix up something to eat while I'm gone for the gas, and you'll feel better."

"I don't want anything to eat—" she began, but he was out of the door.

"Funny female woman, that," he said to himself, as he stumbled through the sand-drifts. "She's about as sociable as an Epworth League party. But she's sure a little peach. I don't mind committing myself so far as to say that I'm for her."

From the trunk on the rear of the runabout he raised his box of groceries to his shoulder and started back toward the tent-house. Then he gasped and ran. The agonized screams of the school-teacher—shrill, close-throated, panic-stricken—came from within. He had never heard anyone scream that way, and the sounds hurt him. He threw himself through the flimsy door and dropped his groceries.

"What is it?"

She was leaning far back on her box, her eyes closed, and her face gray in the feeble light. Her feet were stuck straight out before her, clear of the floor; under them a dull snake, with gleaming eyes, lay coiled. "Oh, kill it! Kill it!" the girl moaned. "I think it bit me!"

The man wrenched a stick from the sagging door and with one blow broke the snake's back. He threw the wriggling, rattling thing aside and knelt by her. "Where did he strike you?"

She put her feet down with a jerk. "I'm not sure—that he did. Is—is it dead?"

"Yes. You want to be pretty sure about being bitten." His face was pale now, and he ran over hastily, in his mind, the first-aid remedies that would be least likely to fail. He put one hand on her ankle.

The girl twitched back. "How would it feel—if I were bitten?"

"You'd know, I guess, if it struck.

Like two hot needles. Where did he come from?"

"From under the box." She shivered convulsively. "I moved my foot and he started that frightful rattling. So I jerked my feet up. Can't you kill him dead?"

"He's dead enough." It was evident that the girl had been only badly frightened. He grinned a little, but he did not let her see. "I'll bury him, and that'll shut him up." He picked up the ugly, flat-headed reptile by the rattles and took it outside. The venomous whirring ceased, and the man came back. "It was a side-winder—a kind of rattlesnake that blooms on the desert," he said. "The heat started it looking for dinner, I guess."

"Aren't they deadly poisonous?"

He busied himself with the groceries, untying parcels and opening cans. "Not exactly deadly poisonous—always. But I wouldn't want to let 'em strike me just for amusement."


WHILE beans were steaming in the oven and bacon sizzling in an improvised skillet on top of the stove, the man went out and presently came back with one of the headlights from the machine, and with a gas-tank. When these were set up and the tent-house illuminated, he picked up half a loaf of bread and an apple, shoved the table close to her box and took his hat. "I'll make it as quick as I can," he said. "Anything more I can do for you before I go?"

She hesitated for a moment, and then suddenly wheeled toward him. Her face was flaming. "I can't stay here alone. I know I can't. That snake—ugh! I'm sorry, but if you can't take me you'll have to stay. Perhaps in a little while I'll be rested and able—"

She watched him narrowly. If he had made a false move then, she would have walked from the place in spite of the ankle—crawled from it on her hands and knees. But he merely frowned, looked at his watch, took off his hat and smiled—that frank, friendly smile of his. For a moment they stared at each other—and both understood.

They ate supper with few words.

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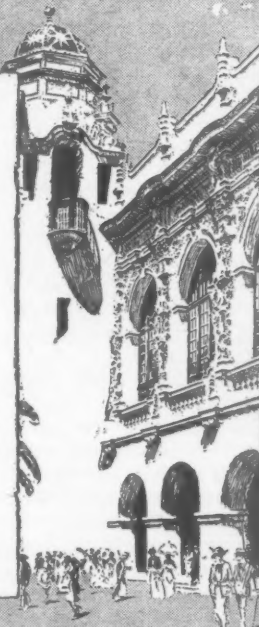


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Then, while he cleared up the table, she tentatively tried the injured ankle. "It's no use," she said, with little grimaces of pain tightening her lips. "I can't walk. What will we do?"

"The only thing there is left to do—stay here," he said, as though it were the most natural thing in the world for them. He gave her no time to debate the matter, for he knew the desert, and she did not. Grease-wood branches and an armful of straw that he found were heaped up as a mattress. He threw the automobile rug across this rude bed, relighted the candle, put it, with a handful of matches, on the table near by, and crossed to the door. "Good-night," he said.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I'll sleep in the other tent. Oh, don't worry: I've done worse." He paused at the door. "Isn't there something we could do for the ankle?"

"If we had a bandage, I expect a cold compress would be—"

"That's a whole idea by itself," he exclaimed, and went out, returning shortly with a bundle of white strips of cloth. He colored as he handed them to her. "Just my—my shirt," he said.

"Oh, why did you do that?" she cried, really touched. And she liked the man for what he had done, but more for his embarrassment. She gave him a friendly good-night, opened her bag,—which he had placed at her hand,—pulled the automobile rug about her slim shoulders, and while wondering if she could ever get to sleep, began to dream of a big chap with boots on wading to her through an irrigating-ditch, while she sat at a table in a private car, and asking her to hold the mules while he went for some gasoline.

THE girl with the injured ankle and the man of the low gray roadster—unwitting agent of Romance and Adventure—were awakened at about the same time in the night and by the same sound—the sudden violent rush of wind that shook the two tent-frames and set the loose canvas to bellying and flapping angrily. The girl shivered and sniffed at the air, which was full of fine dust.

There was a moment's lull; then the girl heard a whirling blast coming,

caught her breath as it struck her tent, shaking it violently, and screamed as it hit the second tent, which gave before the hurricane with sounds of ripping canvas, falling frame and splintered boards. Almost immediately, above the roar, came the man's voice. "It's all right—never touched me. . . . But my tent's started for Arizona!"

"Come in here," she cried. "Come in—quickly!"

He entered cautiously, bracing his body against the door to keep it on its hinges and closing it with an effort. The canvas was jerking about as though alive; the scantling and boards in the framework creaked and groaned. Outside, the howling of the wind in the brush was terrifying; inside, fine dust filled the air; every knothole and crack whistled or screamed; the tent-cloth slapped and cracked against the supporting posts and rafters.

The man came to the bed, feeling his way carefully in the pitchy darkness. She saw him looming there beside her, and she reached out and seized his arm. "Will it blow this tent over too?" she cried.

"I don't think so. This frame seems to be well built. The wind isn't as bad as it sounds, anyway. Cover your head up and go to sleep. I'll stay here."

He sat down with his back against the foot of the cot. The girl covered her head as she was bade, convinced that she could never go to sleep, but desiring to keep out the dust and as much of the terrifying sound as she could. There was great comfort in feeling that that tall, strong young man was at hand. . . . Some time later she was dreaming again.

She was awakened the next morning—not by the wind but by the silence that followed its passing; and she lay looking musingly about until she caught sight of his long figure, stretched out on the floor near the door. It had swung loose during the night, and he had lain there to keep it closed. His face was covered by one outflung arm. She colored at the thought of their companionship and its strange informality, but her heart-beats quickened as she thought how kindly and thoughtful he had been—how mannerly and cour-





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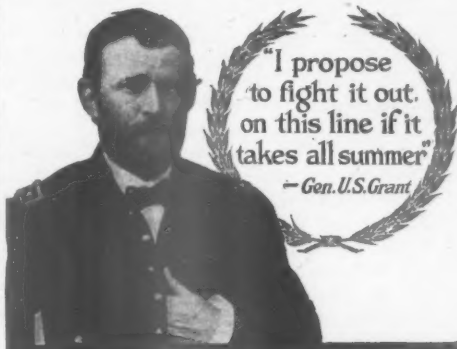
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teous. How strange to find a mere ranch foreman, out here in this rough pioneer country, who was so well-bred and so much a gentleman under that rough exterior! She decided that he wasn't handsome, but that he was big and clean and strong; and she thought with what pleasure she would recall the memories of this strange adventure.

And meanwhile, from the cover of his arm, he lay watching her and thinking how pretty she was, even in these circumstances so fatal to the niceties of a woman's toilet—her hair massed about her face, one gray-sleeved arm lying on the dark brown of the rug, her gray eyes deep and understanding and beautiful. And he thought of the memories he would cherish—and wondered what school she was to teach.

AS though to make up for its sullenness and temper of the night, the desert lay still and fresh and lovely before them when—his strong arm about her to lighten the load on the injured ankle—they went out to the machine when she had called to him from the tent-house that she was ready. She had decided it would be much pleasanter sitting there waiting for his return with the gasoline. And so she watched him swinging off across the sand toward the low line of trees in the distance.

In less than two hours he was back with a jug of gasoline; the tank was refilled; the last odds and ends were recovered from the tent-house; and they started on in toward civilization.

"I didn't want any talkative farmers driving out with me," he explained, "so I only brought a little gas. It's enough to get us in."

"Do you suppose we'll run across anyone who knows the Weldons?" the girl asked. "It seems strange. I thought they were well known."

The man turned on her blankly. "The which?" he blurted. "The Weldons?"

His companion was not less puzzled than he. "You act as though you'd never heard the name before," she said, with some slight return to her suspicious manner of the night before. "Beulah married a man named—"

And there she stopped. Her face became crimson. The little pink edges of the little pink ears peeping out from under the dark hair, took on a deep red. "What will you ever think of me?" she gasped.

"If you don't complete one small sentence, I'll think you've gone stick, stark, raving crazy," he declared promptly. "What's Webb Weldon—"

"Oh, don't you see? I was trying to find Mrs. Webb Weldon, who used to be Beulah Kenmore. I was frightened and hurt and I gave you the wrong name—Mrs. Kenmore. It's too absurd to happen outside a farce-comedy."

The driver lay back and laughed. Then he laughed again. Then he started to make her a reassuring reply and the joke got the better of him. By that time she was laughing too.

"Oh, it's too precious darn good for any mortal use!" the man affirmed, between unrestrained whoops of glee. "I've known Webb Weldon ever since he came to the Valley, and I've met his wife a dozen times. We weren't a mile from your place when I picked you up. And we came past it just after—just after you went to sleep—on my shoulder."

"You're a coward!" she flared at him, but it didn't hurt, because on top of the flare she flashed him a frank and friendly smile. "Do you suppose anyone will ever find out this preposterous story?"

"Well, I won't tell, you may be sure."

She looked at him straight. "You've been very kind and thoughtful to me. I misunderstood a little last night, and I'm sorry. And it was all my own fault. I'm not going to try to thank you."

"You needn't try," he said abruptly. "I wanted to make up for Billy Lynn. . . . And here we are!"

TEAMS were just beginning to string out to the fields when they drove up the avenue of cottonwoods to the Weldon place. In the driveway stood a sad-looking little car, and on the wide porch of the house stood a woman—her hair in braids down her back, and her face showing traces of tears—and a man. As the gray car came to a stop,

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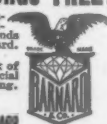
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the woman on the porch turned, stared—then uttered a cry and came flying out.

"Brooks Corwin!" she cried, and the little girl in the gray traveling-suit, forgetting her twisted ankle, slid to the ground and met her in a woman's embrace.

"Beulah!" said the adventuress in the rumpled suit. "Beulah dear, it's good to see you!"

"Where on earth—oh, child, where have you been?" Mrs. Weldon held the other from her and gazed at her through swimming eyes.

Weldon was greeting the man in the car. "Hello, Alec! So you're the hero?"

The girl in gray began to laugh. "Did you think I was kidnaped?"

"We didn't know what to think," Weldon said. "Our telephone was out of order, and your telegram saying you were coming over was put in our mailbox—so we didn't get it until late last night."

"I've been in good hands,"—the girl in gray bowed to the driver of the car,—"but I came very near being kidnaped, at that. He'll tell you." She nodded toward Foreman and limped off to the house with Mrs. Weldon.

"Well, Alec," said Weldon, "this seems to be a healthy young mystery. Where the dickens *have* you been?"

Foreman told him: of the misconduct of Billy Lynn, of his own rescue of the lady, of her excited mistake in asking for the "Kenmores," of his search for anyone of that name, of the exhaustion of his gasoline, of their taking refuge in the tent-house, of the snake, the windstorm—the whole fantastic adventure. "And so," he concluded, "we—we stayed there all night. And if you laugh, I'll brain you with a wrench. It's no laughing matter."

THEY went on into the house. "Lord," exclaimed Weldon as they crossed the hall, "it's a lucky thing the papers haven't got hold of this. If

they found out that the daughter of Vice President Corwin of the Southern Pacific Railroad had—"

"Corwin?" gasped Foreman weakly. "Is that old Jim Corwin's daughter?"

"Yes, my son," Weldon said. "Who did you think she was?"

"I thought she was a school-teacher, and she didn't tell me anything different. On me, all right."

As they entered the big living-room, Brooks and Beulah were just leaving it by another door. "Just a moment," called Weldon, chuckling. "Miss Corwin, may I present Mr. Alexander Foreman?"

Miss Corwin had turned; now she blushed and stammered: "Mr. Fore—why didn't you tell me your name? I thought you were a ranch foreman; and you let me think so!"

"And you—you let me think you were the new school-teacher. Aren't we even?"

WHILE Mrs. Weldon was aiding her disheveled guest into fresh clothes, the latter kissed her affectionately. "Beulah dear," she said, with a bright spot on either cheek, "isn't Mr. Foreman a dandy chap? I suppose—are you going to ask him to stay to breakfast?"

Mrs. Weldon looked at the girl keenly and shook a warning finger. "Why, Miss Tenderfoot, are you blushing?" she asked.

At the same time Foreman, grunting and splashing under the shower downstairs, was bellowing: "Scat my cats! Webb, you might ask a fellow to have something to eat, mightn't you? Am I going to stay to breakfast or am I not?"

Weldon giggled. "Breakfast, you faker; you're not thinking of breakfast. Why don't you ask me to invite you to stay to Miss Brooks Corwin? . . . Well, I suppose we'll have to. But that water isn't hot enough to make your face red. Come out of it quick, or you'll be having apoplexy!"

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# All That A Man Hath

*THE story of a lawyer who tried always to be on the side of the right.*

By Florence Tabor Critchlow

I AM married to a man with a conscience. Perhaps I'd better confess at once that, although he was also poor, ambitious and young, it was for his conscience's sake that I accepted Willard Lester. In extenuation, I can plead only that idealism of youth which always hopes that it can dare the angel of the flaming sword, and lead the world back to the ancient Garden.

But I did one bigger fool thing. When we were engaged, I exacted from him a pledge never to take the wrong side of a case; and he confided to me that his loftiest ambition would be fulfilled if he could earn the title of The Poor Man's Friend. He said that words of simple gratitude would be sweeter in his ears than the flapping of the golden eagles' wings.

This was a fortunate taste, because, in those early years, the Mint eagles didn't flap frequently in our vicinity. But how proud I used to be of Husband, when he would turn down a fifty-dollar retainer to foreclose on a poor widow's home, even though I had to collect the widow's meager fee in laundry work, and she scorched my sheets, and burned table-cloths with acids; and I had to stay in the house all winter, because gratitude wouldn't keep my feet warm! Only the troubles of the Snaith family taught me the difference between the feminine and the legal conscience.

The Snaiths lived in a rattle-down shanty just beyond—though, unpleasantly, not behind—our barn. Mitt Snaith was a lazy ronion, with the thick, flat face of the negro, the supple body of an Indian, and the languid *patois* of the Creole—these elements being mixed

in his make-up. His wife, Stella Rebecca, was a mulatto, with a figure of the kind called "strapping."

"Of co'se," she used to explain, "I could 'a' married a man neaheh meh own coloh, but that Milton Comwell Napoleon Snaith, he jes' natchelly took me."

While Mitt was working for Sid Coleridge, he lazily dropped the reins, and the team ran away; Mitt and his boy were thrown out and under the wheels of the big tank-wagon. The boy was crushed to death, and Mitt's legs broken, so that for nearly a year he could walk only with the aid of crutches. Coleridge voluntarily paid the surgeon and hospital bills, and fed the family with flour and produce from the farm.

But Snaith, with a negro's characteristic desire for notoriety, was determined to sue for damages. In vain did my husband explain that he had no case; that his own carelessness was to blame for the accident. Snaith always ended with some variation of his plaintive, "Tha's jes' the way! Poor man haint got no chance."

TO me it wasn't at all surprising when the people began to talk of my husband for a certain office. The periodic reform tide was at its spring height; the people demanded a square deal; the Poor Man's Friend was their choice. At the great county mass-meeting, it was agreed that this particular office should be taken out of politics. Both parties agreed to nominate Lester. He would be elected almost by acclamation. The salary was small, but I was just breathing in the





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delicious thought of its certainty, when Willard rose, to accept, as I supposed.

"Gentlemen," he began, "while I appreciate the trust you place in me, I have to tell you, frankly, that I cannot afford to take the office. The salary is not large enough. I know that a public-spirited man is not supposed to care about money; at least, it is thought bad taste for a candidate to mention salary. I could live on it, but I cannot afford both to live on it for a term of years, and to lose my private practice, save nothing, and have to start the world over again at the end."

"We'll make you Governor, when this job's done," some one in the audience shouted, and was loudly approved.

"That sounds good," Lester admitted, with the smile which won him so many friends, "but the salary of a Governor is even less than this one. The fact is well known that no man can afford to be Governor of this State unless he is rich, or expects to become rich."

This flattened the audience for a moment, until an old farmer cried out, "I'll furnish all your potatoes, Lester;" and another chimed in. "I'll furnish all your flour."

The vast crowd caught the great idea, and offers poured in of every supply needed by a plain, middle-class family. The laughing applause was broken by a single long, vicious hiss. Into the appalled silence came these words:

"How can the man be honest if he takes bribes from half the county?"

The candidate was instantly on his feet.

"The gentleman is right. While I appreciate the spirit of your gifts, if I should accept them the time might come when you would doubt my integrity. But in the face of such confidence, I cannot refuse to serve you, and to do the best I can with the regular salary."

The meeting broke up in a tornado of applause. We lost ourselves in the crowd and got away to the park instead of going home, where they looked for us. It was the proudest and the most precious moment in Wil-

lard's life, except one. But he did want to know who had hissed, and objected.

"Mitt Snaith! After all we've done for him!" I answered bitterly.

"Oh, well," he laughed, "all philanthropists make the mistake of expecting to handcuff a man's conscience with gratitude."

Two days later, Tom Fletcher, driving into town, overtook Sid Coleridge's team, grazing by the road-side. Sid lay face down on the floor of the wagon, shot dead. Fletcher hitched the team to the back of his buggy, and so brought the body and news into town.

A posse, immediately organized, went back to the scene to search for the murderer. The staid old plow-horses had not wandered far. In a thicket of young trees and brushwood by the roadside they found the hollowed nest in the dead leaves, where the unknown had lain in wait for his victim. But no tracks definable to their eyes led to or from the spot. The murderer had left no cigar-stub, collar-button, or rare brand of burnt match, as convenient clues to amateur detectives.

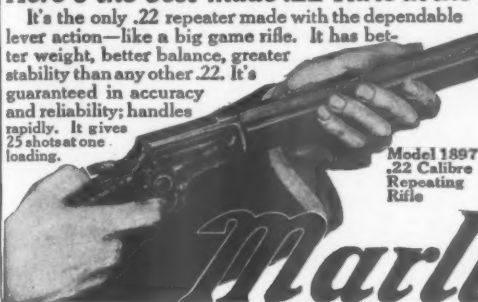
Coleridge was not only a prominent citizen, but a well-beloved man. A reasonable motive for his death was inconceivable. Robbery was unconsidered. His gold eye-glasses, a costly watch, a rare seal ring, his papers and his pocket-book, containing nearly fifty dollars, were all on his person. Apparently, the body had not been touched after its fall. But why else should anyone kill a man so universally liked? Had he an unknown enemy?

Some one remembered that Mitt Snaith had threatened to "get even" with Coleridge. By the way, where was Snaith? Date Burns recalled sending him a gun that morning, "to hunt squirrels." Inquiry at the shanty elicited from Stella Rebecca that he had gone blackberrying—she didn't exactly know where.

Late that night, Snaith limped into town, carrying his pail full of berries, two dead squirrels, and a string of meadow-larks. He said that he had

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gone to Morrissett's Hollow, where the berries were known to be plentiful, and had stopped on his way to borrow the gun, which he had returned coming home. Suspicion, once attached to his name, clung and fattened. The Coroner's verdict implicated him. He was arrested and—a certain sequel—sent for Lester.

"You're not going to take his case?" I demanded of my husband, with indignation, on his return from the jail.

"Why not?"

"Defend the murderer of your best friend?"

"Do you know that he is the murderer?" he pinned me down.

"Everyone says so."

"But they have no right to say so until they hear the evidence." And that was all that I could get out of him.

ON the day of the examination, the court-room overflowed with the friends of Coleridge, from every part of the county. It being impossible to force passage through the main entrance, the lawyers came in from the chambers, with the Sheriff, the prisoner, and the Judge. The moment Willard reached his desk, Johnny Armistead jumped over the railing, shook a doubled fist in his face, and in a deep, melodramatic voice, cried:

"Willard Lester, we are here to see that the death of Coleridge is avenged. If you attempt to protect his murderer, you'll get all that's coming to him, and get it first."

As Johnny was under five feet in height, and weakened like a frost-bitten apple, the effect was that of a rat-terrier seeking a duel with a mastiff. Anticipating trouble, Willard had not trusted to his splendid young strength, which might have sufficed with only a few opponents. He was there to defend not himself, but his client. Remarking, "All right, Johnny, but here's something which says that thirteen of you will go down first," he laid on the table two bulldog revolvers.

In themselves they would have been of little real use against an angry mob, but their moral effect, in the hands of

a man known for his cool determination, was overwhelming. It was his slow, cold, maddening smile which broke the tension. Johnny subsided; the crowd audibly relaxed; and Snaith giggled hysterically. Even a mob hesitates to defy a man who is laughing at it.

Tom Fletcher had seen Coleridge pass his place about nine o'clock. He was sure of the time because the school bell was ringing. Fletcher had left home about a quarter to ten. He had found the body at half past ten. He was driving a road horse with a light buggy, but had driven rather slowly. Coleridge, with his work-team, could not have made the distance in less than an hour. The time of death was thus fixed between ten and ten-thirty. Fletcher, coming toward the scene, had heard no gun. Physicians verified the probable time of death.

Date Burns confirmed Snaith's story of borrowing the gun. Burns lived nearly a quarter of a mile from the roadside thicket. About ten o'clock that morning he had heard a shot, and had recognized, so he said, the sound of his own gun. Absurd as this sounds, it was on that day conclusive, to men already excited with prejudice. Snaith was held for trial on the charge of murder in the first degree.

That evening a committee of leading citizens waited upon Lester. Did he really intend to defend Snaith? He did.

"I thought you never took the wrong side of a case," Johnny Armistead sneered. Lester had once refused a fee from him, refused it even when doubled and trebled.

"I do not."

"But everyone knows that Snaith killed Coleridge."

"How do you know?" Willard leaned forward with intense interest.

"Because there aint any other skunk in the county mean enough."

"Oh! I thought, from the way you spoke, that you had some new evidence," was the disappointed comment, as he dropped back into a comfortable position.

"We'll have the evidence, all right." Armistead nodded significantly. "And

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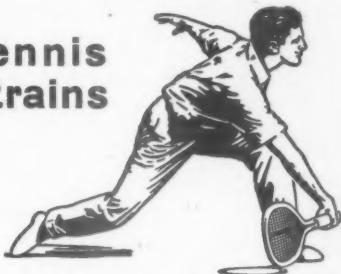
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A few drops of this clean, fragrant, refreshing liniment, well rubbed in, will do the work effectively and leave no greasy residue.

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Acts promptly in allaying pain and reducing sprains, wrenches, swellings, enlarged veins and glands.

Absorbine, Jr., is made of herbs and is non-poisonous—safe to use anywhere.

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**Absorbine, Jr., \$1.00 4-oz., and \$2.00 12-oz. bottle, at most druggists' or delivered.**

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July '15

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we'll show up your damned hypocrisy about the right side of a case. Sid Coleridge was my neighbor, and I'm going to see his murderer hung. And you, Lester, will be ashamed to meet Sid in the next world if you go back on him now. You're taking the wrong side of this case, and I'll be damned if I can see why."

"You do not know whether Snaith is guilty or not," Lester explained. "You do not yet know who murdered Coleridge. That is for the evidence to show, and for the jury to decide. And, even if you should bring a man to swear that he saw Snaith fire that shot, it would still be my duty, my right and my privilege, to defend him. I am still on the right side of the case."

"Another thing, Lester, you might as well know. If you go on with this thing, it will kill you dead, politically, in the County and the State, deader than a squashed June-bug. You'll never be elected to anything but an epitaph. By jingo, we'll hold another caucus, and nominate my old red dog before you shall have an office."

WHEN they left, Willard was smiling in that provocative way that would make Raphael, mildest of arch-angels, want to bat him over the head with his trumpet. I just saw that comfortable salary fading away like a lovely sunset. Of course, I had to bump my head against that smile.

"Is Snaith really innocent?"

"That is for the jury to determine."

"But what do you believe?"

"Every man is innocent until he is proved guilty. No one has a right to believe otherwise until he has heard the evidence."

"But what do you honestly think?"

"I'm not on the jury."

"Do you think it worth while to sacrifice your whole career for that good-for-nothing?"

"Look here,"—my husband faced me sharply, so I knew I had succeeded in disturbing him,—"how do you know what use the Lord has for him? I'm no tract society, but I do believe that in the eyes of the Great Judge, Snaith

has the same standing as any other human being. I do know that under the Constitution he has the same rights as any other citizen, and I'm going to see that he gets them."

Stella Rebecca also called, formally, at the front door, "to consultate with my attu'ney."

"I done thought, Mr. Lester," she opened, "that you was hired to git Milton Cromwell off. An' yit, here he is in a dark dungeon, far away from his home and friends, while you is sittin' by you' comfortable fireside. Aint you a-goin' to git him off?"

"At the right time. Wait till the trial."

"Wal, I don' think it nowise fair to keep a man what aint done nawthin' shut up, while you lawyers argufy."

With exact patience he explained that by the time of the trial people would be quieted down, and more inclined to listen to the evidence fairly.

"They really haven't the shadow of a case against your husband," he reassured her. "The sound of a gun proves nothing."

"Then why don' you git him off? Aint that what you's paid for?"

"But, if I got him off now, he'd be rearrested. When he's once been tried and acquitted, he's free forever."

"Anyway, you was hired to git him off, and you'd ought to 'a' done it. What's a lawyer for, if he don't do nawthin'?"

"If you would rather, the court will appoint some other lawyer—Daniells, or Murbridge."

"No, no, no! For the Lawd's sake, don' you done go an' go back on Milton Cromwell. Haint 'nother lawyer in the country'd be good to Milton. Gawd bless you, Mr. Lester. We can't pay you, but He will. If you can't help us, nobody kin. Why, we'd jes' natchelly lay down and die for you."

I asked Willard how much they had paid him.

"Not a cent," he said. "The County pays ten dollars and costs."

"And you stand such impudent complaints?"

"Oh," he laughed, "it doesn't hurt me, and it makes her feel good."



THERE were committees of remonstrance, committees of consultation, and a blizzard of correspondence, and a vast network of political wires run up on temporary poles. Finding new caucuses impracticable, it was arranged that the name of a complaisant candidate was to be written in, and Lester to be unanimously scratched.

A committee of women begged me to use my sweet feminine influence. They told me that Lester had been offered five thousand dollars to assist the prosecution—and that, before he had been appointed as Snaith's attorney.

"Why didn't you take it?" I wrathfully demanded.

"It was the wrong side of the case," he told me.

"I should think, anyway, if you couldn't take the wrong side, you could have kept out of the dirty business altogether, and then you'd have been elected."

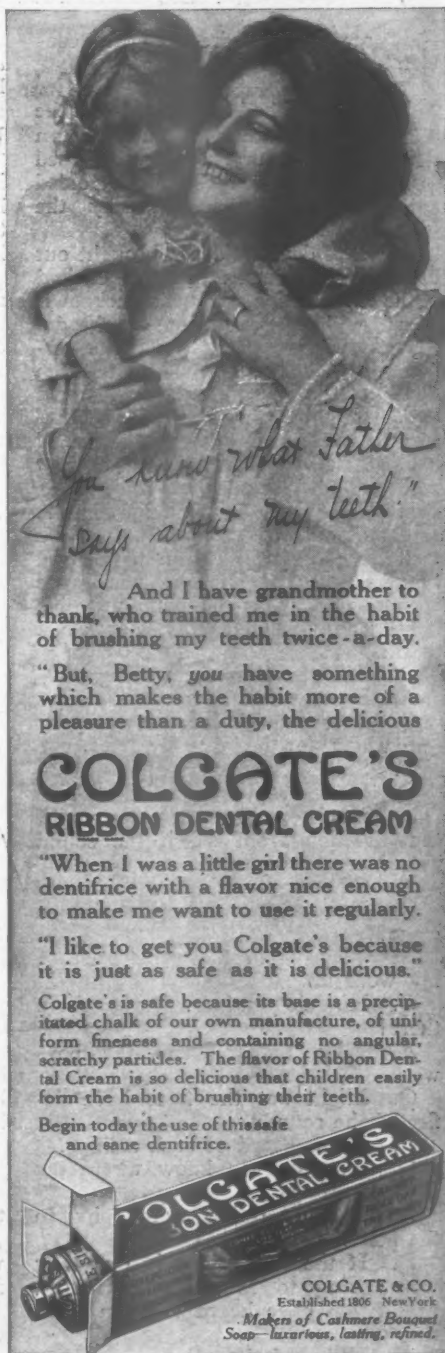
"There are things you do not understand about the law," he said. "If I had refused to defend Snaith, I should have been fined one hundred dollars for contempt of court."

"You could have afforded it, to keep clean."

"Yes,"—slowly,—"I could. I was offered one thousand dollars to stay neutral, as you suggest. But I couldn't afford the knowledge to myself that I had done an unjust, an unfair, deed. What I've always liked about the law is its sporting quality. It's all a huge game, but it's a game squarely played. It guarantees every man, guilty or innocent, the right to a fair trial. Do you think Snaith would have a decent chance, if I had refused him, if I had helped the prosecution against some little pettifogger to whom the county fee looks big?"

"Where's your fair chance? I should think those politicians would see that you're only doing what they praised you for, a few weeks ago."

"The crowd never reasons; it only feels, and feels but one emotion at a time. Last month it admired me; last week it grieved for Coleridge. To-day it is angry at Snaith. After his trial it will probably want to lynch me. I



*You know what Father says about my teeth.*

And I have grandmother to thank, who trained me in the habit of brushing my teeth twice-a-day.

"But, Betty, you have something which makes the habit more of a pleasure than a duty, the delicious

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don't see how they're going to convict."

EVERYONE had anticipated that the defense would make a stubborn fight over the jury, but Lester used his challenges sparingly, and avoided antagonizing men accepted by the prosecution.

The first day's evidence brought out only the full details of facts elicited at the examination, and tacitly acknowledged, with one exception, by the defense. Nothing could shake the certainty of Date Burns that the shot he had heard had been fired from his own gun. Why, he knew the voice of that gun as well as he knew the voice of his own wife. Any man was a fool who couldn't recognize the voice of his own gun. On cross-examination, he said that only a few days before the trial he had lent the gun to Charlie Stavers and Pat Dickens, who were spending a day at the pond near his house, and wanted to shoot at a mark.

Q. Did you hear them firing it?

A. Several times.

Q. You're quite sure it was your gun which you heard?

A. Sure? Sure as fate!

Q. Some people are a little doubtful about fate. Were you certain of the direction from which the sound came?

A. Of course.

Q. From what direction did it come?

A. Why, from the pond back of my wood-lot.

Q. How do you know it came from there?

A. Why, that's where the boys were.

Q. Might not the trees have deflected the sound?

A. Never heard of such a thing.

Q. How do you know where the boys were?

A. They said they were going to the pond.

Q. If the boys had said that they were going to Morrissett's Hollow, would you have heard the gun from that direction?

A. Yes. (*As he caught the amuse-*

*ment of the spectators, the witness became confused.*) Er—no, I don't believe a gun could be heard that far.

LESTER looked at the jury with that smile which seemed to take them into his confidence, and to intimate that he didn't need to rub it into their intelligence that the witness had involved himself in a vicious circle.

When Johnny Armistead was called, next day, Lester was surprised, though from his bored indifference no one but myself guessed it. Armistead said that he and three other men were working in his orchard, on the day that Coleridge was killed. They had heard a gun. Immediately afterward, they had seen Snaith running from the place whence the sound had come. They had laughed, and one said he guessed the shot had scared the lameness out of Snaith. This was just after ten o'clock. The other men gave the same testimony. On cross-examination, Armistead was asked how he knew the time.

A. I looked at my watch.

Q. Oh, you looked at your watch. Do you generally carry a watch when you are at work in the fields?

A. Well, I did that day. It wasn't in the fields; it was in the orchard.

Q. I see (*musingly*): you carry a watch in the orchard but not in the field. Why this invidious distinction?

(The question was ruled out, of course, but the jury had seen the point.)

Q. How did you happen to look at your watch at just that moment?

(If Willard had asked him *why* he did, he would have answered that he happened to, and would have been on his guard against the trap which caught him because sprung so quietly.)

A. Well, I thought there was something funny about that fellow being over there, and it might be a good thing to know the time.

Q. Why should you think there was anything funny about seeing a man in that place?

A. Well, it just seemed that way to me.

Q. Oh, it just seemed that way to



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you! How far away was he from you? I mean, how far were you from the woods where you say he was?

A. About an eighth of a mile, or a little more.

Q. How could you recognize him at that distance?

A. By his lameness.

Q. How lame was he?

A. Well, that's hard to say—how lame a man is. Snaith was pretty lame at that time.

Q. Oh! He was pretty lame—yet he was running! How is that?

A. Well, he was getting over the ground, but of course he limped.

Q. Was he using his crutches?

A. I couldn't see.

Q. Isn't it a fact that Snaith has never been seen without his crutches since the accident which lamed him?

A. I don't know.

Q. Had you ever seen him without them?

A. No.

Q. Then, if you couldn't see the crutches, how do you know it was Snaith whom you saw? What made you think it was Snaith?

A. Well, by the way he walked.

Q. I thought you said he was running. Did he have a gun?

A. I couldn't see.

Q. Oh! you couldn't see whether he had a gun! Now, can you swear positively that it was Snaith whom you saw, and that he was running?

A. Positively.

Q. How do you know?

A. Well, I know.

AFTER this positive testimony which seemed like swearing that they had seen the shot fired, no one expected the defense to do anything. Several witnesses were introduced to prove that Snaith could not run; that he could only get around with the utmost difficulty, using his crutches. His own presence in the court-room verified this evidence, for he was manifestly unable to do more than crawl about.

Then Charlie Stavers was called, a bright-eyed boy of eighteen.

Q. Did you borrow a gun of Burns last Thursday?

A. Yes.

Q. What make was it?

A. Winchester.

Q. Did you use it?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. It was out of order, so we left it at Stanley Pitcher's and borrowed his Remington.

Q. Did you use that?

A. Yes.

Q. What for?

A. Shooting at a mark.

Q. Where?

A. In Pitcher's pasture lot.

Q. Is that near Burns' pond?

A. No; it is to the east of Burns' house, and the pond lies to the southwest.

Q. Could Burns hear the gun?

A. Probably. The distance is about the same.

Q. Do you think he could be exact as to the direction from which the sound came?

A. No; the report is so loud, and rings so, that it is difficult to be certain of the direction.

Q. Do you think he could tell the sound of that gun from that of his own?

A. Well, it wouldn't seem so, from his testimony.

Q. Can you recognize the difference between guns by the sound?


A. No; and I don't believe anybody else can.

THERE was much amusement in the court-room at the expense of Burns, and more when this testimony was repeated by Stavers' comrade, Pat Dickens. But this fooling could not divert the jury from that damning eye-witness evidence of Armistead and his hired men. The Judge's charge was as favorable as possible to the defense, which seemed only fair, a sort of kindness to the man who was down. The verdict came as expected:

"Murder in the first degree."

I didn't dare look at Willard, until I saw, out of the tail of my eye, that he was smiling as confidently as ever.

Throughout the trial, Snaith had been the duller and most disinterested



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spectator, paying no attention to the witnesses, but watching his attorney with the trustful eyes of a suffering dog. Now, he was dazed, but not resentful.

"Yes, sah," I heard him say as I passed. "It am all right, Mr. Lester. I done reckon you done the bes' you could. I haint blamin' you none. I reckoned if I got off I'd be your nigger for life. Stella Rebecca and me, we both'd worked ourselves to death to 'spress our gratification. An' I'm jes' as much pleased. I knows you done the bes' you could. Co'se those men didn't see me run, the way they thinks they did, 'cause, natchelly, I wa'n't running where they says they done see me."

Then the Sheriff took him away, and Johnny Armistead came up to Willard.

"Say, Lester, now that you're rid of the job, you can have that office. If you'd got him off, that would have been different. You've been white, stood by the poor wretch. We can turn the County upside down in the two weeks before the election."

"Thank you, Johnny," my husband answered, with a twinkle in his eyes; "I'm afraid I'll be too busy to hold office. I've got to clear Snaith."

THE appeal was denied. Snaith was sentenced to be hanged. Apparently the last hope was gone. Some lawyers would have left it so. Willard lay awake, nights, arguing to himself, going around every point of the testimony, muttering:

"I know that orchard business is a lie, but how can I show that to other people—to a jury?"

Many times, when we were out driving, he turned the horses toward the scene of the crime, and lingered by that roadside thicket. I held the horses, while he tramped over the fields, toward Burns' house, toward the pond, to Morrissett's Hollow, to Armistead's orchard. One night he debated whether he should telephone to Chicago or go, and finally decided to go, because in that way he could be sure that his message did not leak out. Three men came back with him, arriv-

ing in the night, and going to the hotel, so that their connection with him was unguessed. They too drove out on the notorious road, and tramped over the fields. They came to our house in the night, and after a long conversation with them, Willard took the early morning train for the capital. After his conference with the Governor, Snaith was reprieved.

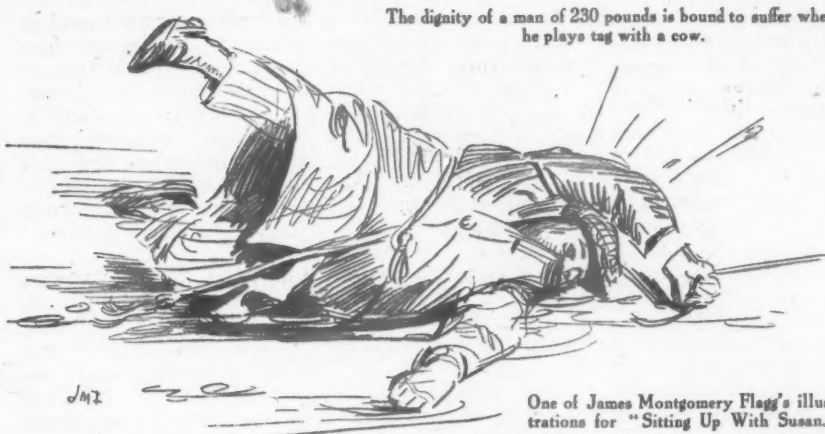
EVERY day, for many weeks, those strange men went out into the country, taking instruments with them. One of the instruments, at least, was a large camera, and they allowed the rumor to go uncontradicted that all of their apparatus pertained to photography. In due time, a new trial was granted to Snaith. Only lawyers can appreciate the difficulty of this, after the case had been legally closed, and the time for appeal and other delays had passed, and the red tape had been all beautifully tied and sealed. I believe that it was only finally accomplished by a writ of mandamus from the Supreme Court.

Up to a certain point, the evidence merely repeated the first trial. Then, the defense introduced witnesses, and business journals, to prove that on the day of the murder Armistead and his friends actually were in the orchard, at the very hours they had sworn that they were there. This astonished the prosecution.

"Your honor," Lester blandly pleaded, "we wish to prove—we shall prove, beyond the possibility of a doubt—that these men were precisely at one certain point, at precisely that hour, and that they could not have been in any other place at that hour."

"It seems that you are doing your best to hang your client; have your own way," the Judge grimly ruled.

Lester next introduced a map of the orchard, drawn to scale, with every tree and bin and packing-shed accurately plotted. Armistead admitted its correctness, so far as he was acquainted with his own property. Two of the supposed photographers turned out to be surveyors, who had made the map. Armistead and his men were asked



The dignity of a man of 230 pounds is bound to suffer when he plays tag with a cow.

One of James Montgomery Flagg's illustrations for "Sitting Up With Susan."

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to locate the exact points at which they had stood, when, as they had sworn, they had seen the man running from the scene of the murder. This was easy, for they had already agreed in swearing that they were at a certain shed, which was easily identified. The prosecution was becoming restless; they didn't understand this evidence.

Next, a map of the whole vicinity was admitted. The four men were each recalled, separately, and asked to show where the running man had appeared, and between what points he had been under observation. There was a gasp of relief from the spectators when the witnesses severally agreed on the path pursued by the escaping murderer.

"This imitation of Daniel in the trial of Susannah is not conspicuously successful, it seems," the Prosecutor gently observed, and even the Judge smiled at the satire.

Even I didn't guess what the defense was driving at, but I recognized Lester's wisdom in not giving it away beforehand by employing local surveyors.

The next map showed all the elevations and depressions of the region in question. Each tree and bush and shed, each boulder and each ditch and hollow was in its place, with its height or depth, its length and its breadth, indicated by the shading, as well as stated in figures. There was also a complete series of photographs and sketches, for the third man was really a photographer and also an artist of considerable ability.

Step by step Lester led the jury over the ground, until each man had discovered for himself that, from the point at which Armistead and his men had stood, they could not see any person near the thicket, or running from it. And the men couldn't change their evidence, on the plea of a mistake, for their position had been fixed with a certainty which could not be contradicted. They had sworn that through a barn, and through a clump of bushes, and over a hill, they had seen a man running in a distant hollow. The verdict of "Not Guilty" came promptly.

As Willard had said, the feelings of

the crowd are easily vaporized, and as easily recrystallized. His spectacular lightning-change act from defeat to victory brought applause as vociferous as the former abuse. But the election was past, and we had spent more than a year's salary in costs which could not be charged to the County, such as fares for Mrs. Snaith's visits to the penitentiary. Simple words of gratitude came high.

Both Snaith and Stella Rebecca groveled before us, until their gratitude nauseated.

"You surely done save my life," ran one of his language orgies. "You know the Good Book say what will a man give for his life? I jes' hope you and Mis' Lester *be* in trouble some time, so's we kin do suthin' for you."

Willard rebuked my incredulous amusement. He said the time might come when I would be glad of even their humble help. It did.

THAT was the winter famous in local history as the year of the Great Blizzard. It wasn't a blizzard, as Western people know them, but a storm of such extent and severity as our sheltered State had seldom known. It began, gently enough, with a steady snow-fall, going on for more than a week, shutting us in with great, white, soft barricades. Some time during Thursday night, the wind changed, bringing sharp, cornered crystals, instead of the feathery flakes, and solidifying the great drifts. I was alone with Emma and Baby May. Willard was at Supreme Court, but I expected him home late Friday night. Old Waddy Pelton was coming, mornings and nights, to do chores and errands. Friday morning I called his attention to the small quantity of wood in the shed, and suggested that more ought to be fetched in from the snow-covered cords outside. He said he hadn't time that day, as he had a lot of path-digging promised. There was enough, he thought, to last till Saturday morning, if I'd try not to be so extravagant. It's odd how failures like Old Waddy always feel competent to criticize and advise their successful em-

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players. As he paddled off, I called to him to bring me a bottle of medicine from the drug-store for Emma's cold.

The bitter weather, and Emma's condition, made it necessary to keep the rooms evenly heated. There wasn't much else to do, except to feed and amuse the two children. The road was invisible through the swirling drifts, which shut out also all sound except the whinnying of the wind. After dark, when I had to give up all hope of Waddy's return that night, I took a lamp into the shed, and fetched in all the wood that remained.

Willard would be home by nine o'clock. I crept into bed with the babies and listened for his train. The wind had died down with the sunset, and the world was blanketed in silence. I was accustomed to the stillness of a great snow-storm, but this quiet was so different. Something was missing—what? Why,—it came to me like a blow,—trains had stopped! Willard couldn't get home!

Next morning the world was all turned to snow and ice. Waddy couldn't come if he would. I pinned the babies firmly into the bed, and fought my way to the barn and fed Billy.

As I left the barn, I saw Mitt and Stella Rebecca watching from the back window of the shanty. Here was an able-bodied man—his lameness was now almost imperceptible—within reach of my voice, one who had begged for the privilege of serving us. At my signal he came to the door. I told him my predicament, and asked him to do the chores, or, at least, to cut enough wood to last until Willard could get home, or until Waddy could get to the house through the drifts. He shook his head. He didn't think he'd better try it. His health wasn't very good.

"Of course I'll pay you; I'm not asking it for nothing," I suddenly interposed, thinking I sensed the cause of his reluctance. But Stella Rebecca put her head over his shoulder.

"Co'se we'd like to kumodate you, Mis' Lester, but I don' noways see how we kin. Yo' see, since you got that job in the store for Wilyum Hen-

nerey Harrison, *he don' 'low he's goin' to let his folks do no moh' man-yul labor.*"

The babies had to be fed and warmed. So—I tackled that woodpile, with the warmth of my wrath to thaw it out, while from their view-point those lazy ronions laughed. I swept off the loose snow; I chopped and pried off the ice; and I dug out some chunks which would go into the heater without splitting. In the woodshed I picked up a basket of chips, with which to get the fire in the sitting-room into action.

When the chips were gone, to keep the fire under the chunks I chopped up all the old furniture I dared to. The barn-work, the pump, and the digging out of the wood, had to be repeated on Sunday morning. When I heard the whistle of the train, I broke down. Willard found me in bed with the babies, shivering from "nerves" more than from cold.

"Why didn't you get Snaith to do the chores?" he demanded, when I had told my troubles. If I failed to express my opinion of Snaith, it was because we didn't yet own an unabridged. Willard didn't laugh. But he wanted to know if I had really supposed that gratitude could keep six months without smelling badly.

WILLARD'S reputation, which had soared like a rocket, remained a fixed star in the legal firmament. As we moved into a better neighborhood, the Snaiths were lost from the plane of our view. Several years had passed. Another election was offering new glories to the Poor Man's Friend. The question of small salary need no longer be considered, and the office was one desired for its splendid opportunities.

On the day before the election I did hear, incidentally, that Snaith was ill, but what had the passing of a pauper half-breed to do with the dinner I was giving that night to the men whose efforts and influence had given my husband the position he most coveted? To-morrow's result was practically assured.

While we waited for the last guest,





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Willard was called to the 'phone. By the twist of his mouth when he returned to us, I knew that there had been a definite reason for sending to him instead of to myself, the hostess, the conventional message which he delivered—that Dr. Cleveland was detained, but would join us as soon as possible. The cause of his delay was known to my husband, and had some serious meaning.

At table, Judge Ostrander called attention to this accidental reunion of those persons most intimately concerned with the now famous trial.

"Yes," agreed John Armistead,—we lose our diminutives if we make good,—we lack only the *Hamlet* of our play."

"Rather, the insignificant *king*," retorted Representative Yates, the former prosecutor. "We, like *Hamlet*, though fully convinced in our own minds, have never learned who did kill our beloved friend. But I foresaw this day of triumph for Lester, a man with grit enough to take the apparently wrong side of the case, in the face of such determined public opinion, because he himself knew it was the right side."

"Milton Snaith was the guilty man," said a quiet voice, like *Hamlet's* ghost, from the dark doorway. "I have just come from his deathbed," Dr. Cleveland added, as he took his place at the table.

"Then you were on the wrong side, for all of your conscience," Judge Ostrander dryly commented, while Yates chuckled:

"Had you any suspicions of the truth?"

"No; I knew it," said my husband, with an odd smile.

"You knew this man guilty of murder, and yet defended him? What do you mean? What about your good faith with the people, your profession of conscience?"

"I knew, without a reasonable doubt, though without any legal proofs, that Snaith killed Coleridge. But I deny that it was murder, and I still believe,

as I did then, that I was right in defending him."

"For God's sake, gentlemen, let's keep this thing hushed till to-morrow night," cried Armistead.

"I'm afraid that's impossible," said Dr. Cleveland gently. "Snaith made a dying deposition."

"Did he show any remorse?" Willard asked curiously.

"Not a particle; it was the most callous deathbed I ever attended. The man seemed actually proud of his deed, confessed because he gloried in it, and regretted that safety had made it impossible for him to gratify that glory while living."

"Exactly," said Willard. "Our criminal laws were made by Aryans, for Aryans. The mind of a Mongolian, or a negro, works in an entirely different way; we can't know what went on in the mind of this creature of strange blood. He did not kill Coleridge in a spirit of malicious revenge, of hatred. He looked upon his deed as an act of judicial retribution, according to the law of his races. To hang him would have been judicial murder. Moreover, our law guarantees even to the malicious murderer a fair and impartial trial. Was it fair to convict him on perjured testimony? I did not twist the evidence; I suppressed nothing. It was our Dr. Cleveland who testified, and truly, that Snaith could not have run from the scene of the murder. He crawled away, Indian fashion, leaving no trail. I stood by him in the court-room and assured him of his rights under our boasted Constitution."

"By the heavens!" cried Yates, "I wish we could make you President to-morrow—an honest man!" It was not ironical.

But under our windows the newsboys were already calling:

"Extry! Extry!" And the sub-headlines read:

All about the Snaith confession. Lester took the part of the guilty man. His defeat to-morrow an absolute certainty!